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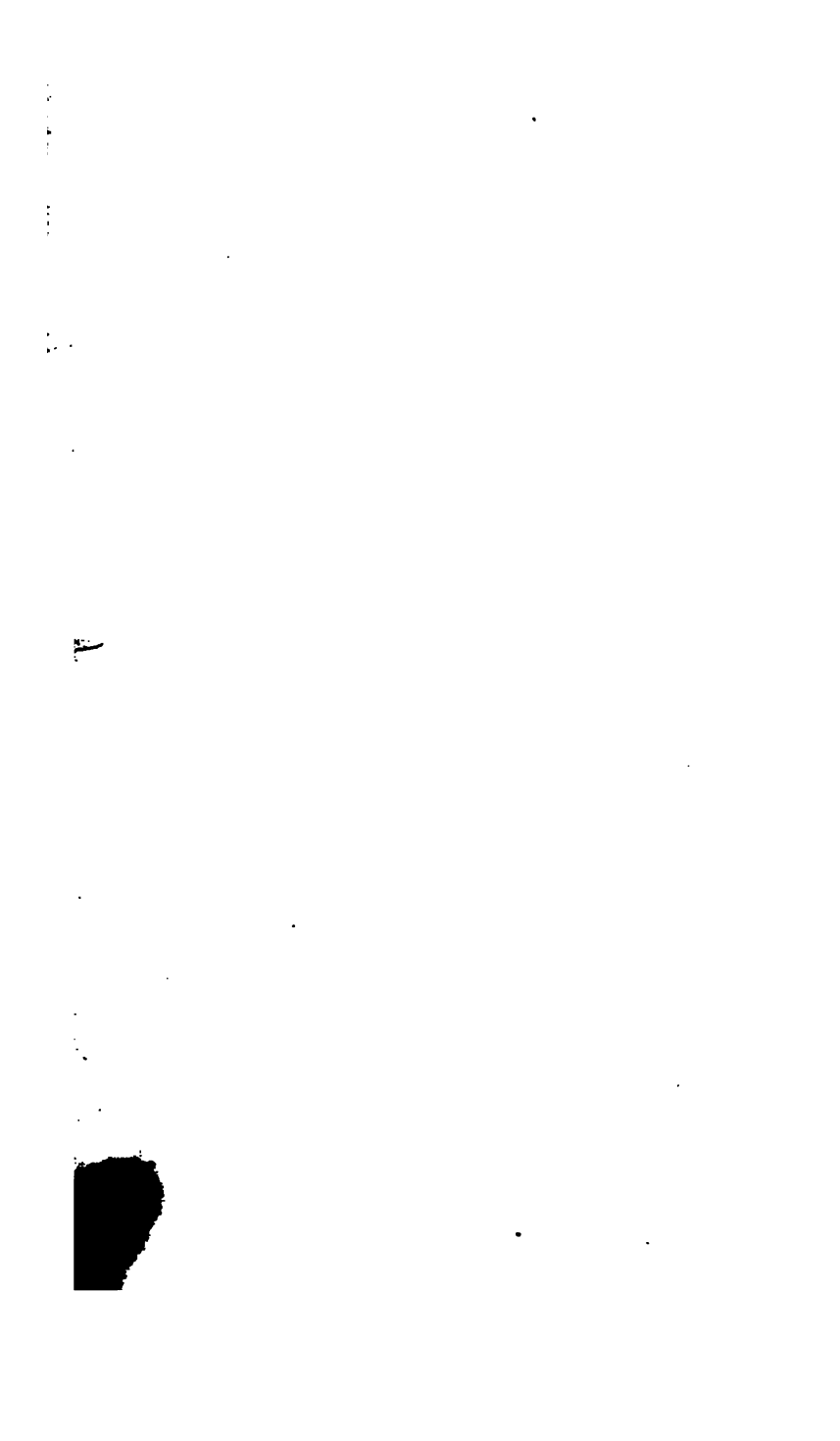


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2. Poetry, English - Collections.
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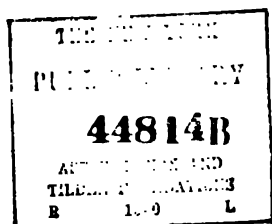
INTRODUCTION
TO
AMERICAN LITERATURE;
OR, THE
ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT
OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE,
WITH GEMS OF POETRY.

"Novelty, however, is not permitted to usurp the place of reason; it may attend, but it shall not conduct the inquiry."—GOLDSMITH.

BY E. L. RICE.

CINCINNATI:
DERBY, BRADLEY & CO.
1846.

E. L.



Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1846,
BY E. L. RICE,
In the Office of the Clerk of the District Court of Ohio.

E. SHEPARD, PRINTER, CIN.

P R E F A C E.

The object of the following work is to present, in a condensed form, the origin and development of the English language and literature. It embraces a concise view of the Saxon, and of the English language and literature, and illustrates the connection that exists between them. In accordance with the demand of the age, one of the principal objects in the preparation of the matter has been condensation, compactness; an effort has been made to compress the matter into the least possible space; and it is hoped that the volume will be found to contain nothing superfluous, while but little essential to a complete analytical view of the subject is omitted. The short paper upon Polite Learning will be found to contain the elements of more matter than many volumes of the terse and beautiful works of Goldsmith, De Stael, and Burke, from which much of it has been drawn; this is owing to the advantages possessed by compilers of our day. Nearly every work that treats of the subject of language, has been consulted, but nothing has been copied from any of them with the exception of the subject of "A Perfect Language," the train of reasoning in which, was chiefly suggested by Condillac; and, a number of valuable notes which have been supplied from 'Mr. Turner's History of the Anglo Saxons.

The language has really been traced back to its origin in the literature of early times; and in conducting the inquiry the appeal has been made to facts instead of authorities and theories: this course has conducted us safely through disputed ground. The literature of each century, from the fifth, when the Saxons established themselves in Britain, has been glanced at in regular succession: yet, only the prominent features of each

age have been transferred to these pages; the gleams of intellect only are preserved. The slow progress which the language made in its early stages, renders it difficult to distinguish each minute step of the process by which it was transformed from the Saxon to the English, but this is not material, as the great features of the change are sufficient to determine the nature of our language; and whatever existed, or, has taken place in ages past, which produced no result, does not belong to history or philosophy of any kind.

It has become so common to rhapsodise about the old English poets, that a dispassionate review of them may appear insipid: they are however considered in the following work, more particularly with regard to their influence upon the language, and what they have really added to our poetry. The extracts have been made with a view to illustrate the gradual development of the language, rather than to bring to light new specimens and detect new beauties; yet none but the most beautiful specimens of each age have been admitted. In this respect this work differs from all others of the same nature; yet an attempt has been made to combine in it the peculiar merits of the following works, and it is believed that it is at least free from their chief defects. Mr. Warton's learned work, which may be considered the pioneer in a historical collection of the kind, commences at too late a date, and is too voluminous and digressive, and excludes the drama. Mr. Ellis' is a chronological collection from the minor poets; without any particular illustration of their genius; Hazlitt's consists entirely of ELEGANT EXTRACTS, and Mr. Campbell's, which is the most complete, is too voluminous; as, in a work of this kind, no specimen is of any consequence which has not the particular characteristic of the author to distinguish it from all others, while a few of this kind are sufficient for the purpose; and his essay on the language and poetry is principally historical.

The literature of the eighteenth century is analysed in a few words, as it embraced but a single school. Mr. Griswold's complete work on the Poets and Poetry of England in the nine-

teenth century has rendered any thing further on the English literature of this age, unnecessary.

The statement has been made thus explicit, inasmuch as it is believed the design of this work is original; and it would be a poor reward for the labor that has been expended upon this small volume, should it be considered in any other light than as an original production, whatever its style of execution may be. And it may not be altogether impertinent to state, that the maxim;—it is unwise to publish, because it reveals the extent of one's knowledge,—does not rigidly refer to this, as but a small part of the matter is published which was prepared in the investigation of the subject, and it had been easier to have made a folio out of it than this small volume. The work was commenced at an early day, and continued till it became a passion; therefore distrusting its merit, it has been submitted to the examination of men, whose names it would be needless to mention, who have commended it and advised its publication. A part of the manuscript, that particularly which treats of the origin and philosophy of the language, has been submitted to the examination of Mr. J. H. Perkins who has pointed out whatever he thought worthy of alteration in its matter and style.

It would be the dictate of a wise discretion to await the decision of the public before making any disclosures with regard to any circumstances connected with the work, and the time that has been employed in its composition; but no desire is felt to escape the responsibility of the undertaking, and it is delivered into the hands of an impartial community with the fullest confidence that it will be regarded with all the liberality that it deserves.

CINCINNATI, MARCH 1, 1846.

CONTENTS

Proem,	Page 13
Polite Learning,	21
Language,	37
A Perfect Language,	47
Origin of the Language,	60
Anglo-Saxon Language and Poetry,	71
Caedmon's Paraphrase,	78
The First Day,	80
Soliloquy of the Rebel Angel,	81
Parallel lines from Milton,	83
Temptation of Eve,	84
Sailing of Beowulf,	87
Gold Night,	88
An old Man's Sorrow,	89
The Exile's Song,	89
Alfred's Meter,	91
Excursiveness of the Mind,	92
Formation of the English Language,	94
Romance,	115
Gest of King Horn,	127
Poetry and Prose,	129
Robert de Brunne,	138
John Wicliffe,	142
Sir John Mandeville,	140

ENGLISH POETS AND GEMS OF POETRY.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER	147	Sergeant of the Law,	171
Versification of Chaucer,	154	Doctor of Physic,	172
The Canterbury Tales,	162	The Parson,	173
The Prologue,	163	The Squire's Tale,	173
The Knight,	165	The Brass Steed,	174
The Squire,	166	The Magic Glass,	176
The Yeoman,	167	The Ring,	176
The Prioress,	168	The Sword,	176
The Monk,	168	The Falcon's complaint,	178
The Friar,	170		

LYDGATE, GOWER CAXTON,	The rich Jew of Malta,.....	240
SURREY, HARRINGTON,	Dr. Faustus,.....	241
GASCOIGNE,.....	SAMUEL DANIEL,.....	244
JOHN LYGATE,.....	Sonnet,.....	244
The Bower,.....	Sonnet,.....	245
WILLIAM CAXTON,.....	Pastoral,....	245
SURREY, Henry Howard,.....	MICHAEL DRAYTON,.....	247
A praise of his love,.....	The Baron's wars,.....	247
The frailty of Beauty,.....	The Castle,.....	247
GEORGE GASCOIGNE,.....	Edward's entrance to the Castle,.....	248
Gascoigne's Good-morrow,.....	The Queen and Mortimer,.....	250
Swiftness of Time,.....	Nymphidia, the Court of Fairy,252
The Lover's Arrangement,....	The Shepherd's Daffodil,....	253
Sir JOHN HARRINGTON,....	Ode,.....	255
Verses of a stony-hearted maiden,196	Sir PHILIP SIDNEY,.....	256
Sonnet on Isabella Markham,..197	Astrophel and Stella,.....	285
EDMUND SPENSER,.....	Sonnet,.....	258
Versification of Spenser,.....	Song,.....	258
The Fairy Queen,.....	Sir WALTER RALEIGH,....	260
The Red Cross Knight,.....	The Shepherd to the Flowers,.....	260
Una,.....	The Silent Lover,.....	261
The Bower of Bliss,.....	A vision upon the Fairy Queen,262	
The Fountain,.....	Verses found in his Bible,.....	262
A Nymph Bathing,.....	JOSHUA SYLVESTER,.....	263
Enchanted Music,.....	A contented mind,.....	263
Prince Arthur,.....	'The soul's errand,.....	264
" and the Soldan,.....	WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE,....	267
Belphebe,.....	Cordelia and King Lear,.....	271
Florimel,.....	Music and Moonlight,.....	273
Pastorella and Calidore,.....	Gallery of Beauty,.....	277
Charissa,.....	Miranda,.....	277
Fancy,.....	Song,.....	278
Hope,.....	Julia,....	278
The Butterfly,.....	Silvia,.....	279
Sonnet,.....	Song,.....	280
Earthly Glory,.....	Olivia,.....	280
MARLOWE, DANIEL, DRAY-	Song,.....	281
TON, SIDNEY, RALEIGH,	Song,.....	282
and SYLVESTER,.....	Portia,.....	282
MARLOWE,.....	Song,.....	283
The Passionate Shepherd,....	Juliet,.....	283
Edward the Second,.....		

Chorus,.....	284	Vernal Air,.....	312
Ophelia,.....	284	Pastoral,.....	313
Song,.....	285	Disdain Returned,	314
Song,.....	285	Song.....	315
Desdemona,.....	285	The Primrose,.....	315
Song,.....	287	COWLEY, CRASHAW, AND	
Ariel's Song,.....	287	DENHAM,.....	316
Songs,.....	287,-8,-9	ABRAHAM COWLEY,.....	318
JONSON, BEAUMONT, AND		Hope.....	319
FLETCHER,.....	290	Love,.....	319
BEN JONSON,.....	291	Drinking,.....	320
Volpone,.....	291	Beauty,.....	321
To Cynthia,.....	293	The Epicure,.....	321
On Lucy,.....	293	Friendship in Absence,.....	322
Song,.....	294	RICHARD CRASHAW,.....	322
BEAUMONT and FLETCHER,.....	294	Sospetto Di Herode,.....	323
Songs,.....	296, 8	Love's Horoscope,.....	324
Melancholy,.....	268	Sir JOHN DENHAM,.....	326
Faithful Shepherdess,.....	299	Cooper's Hill,.....	326
SUCKLING, WALLER, AND		Song,.....	328
CAREW,.....	304	JOHN MILTON,.....	329
Sir JOHN SUCKLING,.....	305	Comus, a Mask,.....	340
The Careless Lover,	305	Il Penseroso,.....	352
Songs,.....	306, 8	L'Allegro,.....	357
EDMUND WALLER,.....	308	Arcades,.....	361
Of English Verse,.....	309	From the Ode on Nativity,.....	365
Song,.....	310	At a Solemn Music,	367
Love's Farewell,.....	310	Song and Sonnet,.....	368
Loving at Sight,.....	311	JOHN DRYDEN,.....	369
Song,.....	311	Invocation,.....	370
THOMAS CAREW,.....	312	Song,.....	371
Poets and Poetry of the Eighteenth Century,.....	373		
Poetry of the Nineteenth Century,.....	389		

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE POETS.

	BORN.	DIED.
ROBERT OF GLOUCESTER,	1230	—
ROBERT DE BRUNNE,	1270	—
JOHN GOWER,	1325	1402
GEOFFREY CHAUCER,	1328	1400
JOHN LYDGATE,	1375	1462
JOHN SKELTON,	1463	1529
SURREY, HENRY HOWARD,	1520	1547
GEORGE GASCOIGNE,	1540	1578
SIR WALTER RALEIGH,	1552	1618
EDMUND SPENSER,	1553	1598-9
SIR PHILIP SIDNEY,	1554	1586
SIR JOHN HARRINGTON,	1561	1612
SAMUEL DANIEL,	1562	1619
CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE,	1562	1592
JOSHUA SYLVESTER,	1563	1618
MICHAEL DRAYTON,	1563	1618
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE,	1564	1616
BEN JONSON,	1574	1637
JOHN FLETCHER,	1576	1625
THOMAS CAREW,	1577	1634
FRANCIS BEAUMONT,	1585	1628
EDMUND WALLER,	1605	1687
JOHN MILTON,	1608	1674
SIR JOHN SUCKLING;	1608-9	1641
RICHARD CRASHAW,	1615	1650
SIR JOHN DENHAM,	1615	1668
ABRAHAM COWLEY.	1618	1667
JOHN DRYDEN,	1631	1701
JOHN ARMSTONG,	1709	1779
JONATHAN SWIFT,	1667	1745
AMBROSE PHILLIPS,	1671	1749
EDWARD YOUNG,	1681	1765
ALEXANDER POPE,	1688	1744

LIST OF POETS.

11

	BORN.	DIED.
ROBERT BLAIR,	1699	1747
JAMES THOMSON,	1700	1748
WILLIAM SHENSTONE,	1714	1763
THOMAS GRAY.	1716	1771
WILLIAM COLLINS,	1720	1756
MARK AKENSIDE,	1721	1770
TOBIAS SMOLLETT,	1721	1771
WILLIAM FALCONER,	1730	1769
OLIVER GOLDSMITH,	1731	1774
CHARLES CHURCHILL,	1731	1764
WILLIAM COWPER,	1731	1800
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH,	1771	0000
SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE,	1773	1814
SIR WALTER SCOTT,	1771	1833
LORD BYRON,	1788	1824
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY,	1792	1822
JOHN KEATS,	1796	1821
THOMAS CAMPBELL,	1777	1844

SAXON WRITERS.

ST. ALDHELM,	—	709
BEDE, THE VENERABLE,	672	735
FLACCUS ALBINUS ALCUIN,	734	804
ALFRED, THE GREAT,	849	900-1

PROEM.



LANGUAGE is of slow growth, and taste in literature and the fine arts comes to maturity only when society attains a high state of civilization and refinement. The germs of thought are sought out after we have beheld its full development: after we have seen the beauty of the rose, and felt its magic power, we delight to analyze its minute organization.

The state of civilization and refinement which our nation has already attained, naturally excites curiosity, and turns our attention to the past, leading us to reflect upon those hidden causes, the effects of which have displayed themselves around us with so much beauty and power.

Our forests have been felled, our wars fought, and our Government established : but these events do not contain the causes of our prosperity ; they are the sensible effects of secret, yet mighty powers, which have renovated the human mind, and transformed the institutions of society. The spectacle which we behold was not wrought out by a single impulse, nor by the succession of any number of fortuitous events. It is

the result of a long series of connected causes and effects, and the principles which have linked them together, and controlled their succession, will reveal the source of their hidden power.

These principles are not mere metaphysical abstractions ; "they are *not* so general in their nature that they can scarcely be seized, so complicated that they can scarcely be unraveled ; *nor* so hidden as scarcely to be discernable."

The doctrine, to which above all others we cling with the tenacity of life, the progressive improvement of the human race, if true, must be the great object in which all others merge. They are all important from their connection with this grand design. But amid the array and sensible splendor of political and physical effects, natural and moral causes have been overlooked or have been supposed to be too transient and fugitive in their nature to stand investigation.

The perfection of the sciences is not the goal in human progression : they are links in the golden chains that lead to it. Man in his primitive state had a clear mind and a far reaching eye. The object of all the institutions which have come into existence since his fall, is not to display their own perfections, but through them to restore man to his. Art, science, literature, and religion itself, are not glorified in reflecting their own images, but in restoring and reflecting the defaced image of man.

Language is an essential element of intellectual, as well as national life ; it alone exerts an efficient power over the past, adding improvement to improvement and keeps alive in the soul the germ of infinity.

Through it thought emanates from the solitary mind, and kindling the sparks in kindred breasts, touches a train which in time transforms the entire face of society.

The spirit of language imparts the principles of generalization, and abstraction, which are elements of the art of reasoning itself. To reason is to imitate the process by which language in its formation separates and combines ideas, and the subordination it institutes among the names which are founded upon the relations these ideas bear to us, to man.

The depths of a nation's knowledge are sounded by studying their language. Here we measure their attainment in the arts and sciences; the genius of the national mind, the nature of its habits, passions, and pursuits, are ascertained from the vernacular tongue; here they are all displayed in miniature, but in lines and shades that are perfectly correct. We judge of one's learning, of the society with which one associates, and of his general character, from his language; and the principle holds as true with regard to nations. From their vocabulary alone, we learn the nature of their tastes, their dispositions, and the extent of their knowledge, and also with a great degree of certainty, their geographical position.

Climate is proverbial for its happy effect upon the body and mind, in producing, what the princess of women calls "*a mellifluous organization*," and mellowing the tones of the human voice, to which language assimilates itself.

The genial soil and the soft skies of France and Italy have imparted a delicious sweetness to the tones

of the human voice, which is unknown in colder regions. This musical property in their language is attributable to these natural causes, which are readily discerned and easily analyzed.

The melody in the modulation of their words, and the harmony in the structure of their sentences, are almost as perfect and sweet as the strains of the minstrel. It is observed that under the warm skies of the West Indies, the causes which produce a musical effect operate so strongly as to lead the creole to vitiate almost every word in pronunciation, in order to effect a melodious sound. According to this simple principle, the Northern languages are generally harsh and rough, while those of the South are sweet and musical.

Were these general principles kept before the mind, language would become a national study ; English etymology would be made to form a part of a classical education ; and then our language would cease to be neglected. Our scholars, in the use of words, would regard their derivation, and original meaning, and then the purity of our language would be preserved, and its superior power displayed. We should be brought back to the Saxon fountain, and by combining in due proportion the various elements which properly constitute our native tongue, we should find it not destitute of great beauty, precision, and energy. It would induce us to preserve our nationality, and to rear upon a permanent foundation a literature of our own, which we should be proud to claim.

In the investigation of our literature, we shall recur briefly to the origin of our language, and trace

it rapidly from its formation through its various changes, seeking out only the principal causes which have affected it. At the same time we shall exhibit it in different specimens, as the language has developed itself in the literature of each age, from the earliest times to the present, especially we shall exhibit it in poetry, wherein it shows its highest power. Thus, the mysterious influence which language exerts upon mind, and upon the destiny of a nation will be clearly revealed, in tracing the steps by which our language has departed from the ancient languages, and perfected itself to its present condition: at the same time we shall learn the relation which ancient learning bears to modern: the distinctive elements of English and American literature will appear, and we shall be prepared to determine with some degree of certainty the nature of American literature, its present state and its future prospects.

Such an investigation promises some pleasure to the refined taste, as well as to the reflecting mind. Its object is truth, yet it aspires to impart pleasure; to make language a rational study, and to rank it among the fine arts; which is to be effected by removing the learned rubbish that has accumulated upon it, rather than by originating or creating anything new. It aspires to utility in the highest sense, by showing the origin and influence of language, and illustrating its development in literature, together with its power for combining and reflecting beauty.

If in our wild rambling and eager pursuit, we have time only to pluck an occasional flower that grows by the path-side, and to pick up but now and

then a gem from the profusion that sparkles beneath our feet, yet we can console ourselves in the reflection, that for a moment, at least, we have turned aside from the beaten track, and withal refreshed our spirits at the springs of learning, and drank at the fountain-head.

There are those, however, who have an aversion for these early times, and can look upon the epoch which is stigmatised by the denomination of the "Dark Ages," only with feelings of horror, as though it was a distinct portion of time, for ever to be separated from all that succeeds; to such, much pleasure cannot safely be promised, unless they delight in romance and fiction. For their encouragement, however, it may not be improper to state that these times will be disposed of with as few suggestions as can possibly satisfy the nature of our design; and we shall hasten to that brighter era when literature, indeed, begins to dawn; when the first successful efforts of learning appear amid the ignorance that prevails, like light shining through broken clouds just before the full risen sun breaks forth in his splendor, to flood the world with his golden beams. And yet those early ages, even from the dim lustre which the Saxon sheds upon them, possess as much interest to the enquiring mind as any succeeding age. There we find, in embryo, many of our institutions, and the germs of most of the principles that now prevail. There we see in activity, processes, the results of which have been subjects for speculation for all succeeding time. Even in the confusion, in the mixing and mingling of diverse customs, laws, and languages,

which marked the middle ages, the powers and intellectual capacities of man were developing, and enlarging, and we see, rising gradually from the chaos, the elements of languages and laws, that are to enlighten and rule the world.

POLITE LEARNING.



Ancient learning may be distinguished into three periods. Its commencement, or the age of poets: its maturity, or the age of philosophers: and its decline, or the age of critics. In the poetical age, commentators were very few, but might have, in some respects, been useful. In its philosophical, their assistance must necessarily become obnoxious; yet, as if the nearer we approached perfection the more we stood in need of their directions, in this period they began to grow numerous. But when polite learning was no more, then it was those literary lawgivers made the most formidable appearance. *Corruptissima republica, plurimæ leges.* GOLDSMITH.

What then is taste, but these internal powers
Active and strong, and feelingly alive
To each fine impulse? a discerning sense
Of decent and sublime, with quick disgust
From things deform'd or disarrang'd or gross
In species? This, nor gems, nor stores of gold,
Nor purple state, nor culture can bestow;
But God alone, when first his active hand
Imprints the secret bias of the soul. AKENSIDE.

So learning, which from reason's fountain springs
Back to the source some secret channel brings. DENHAM.

For a century past, it has been a question with many, and it is not yet resolved, whether English literature is advancing or on the decline.

Some look upon the past, as its golden days, and suppose that the sun, which for three centuries shone with increasing splendor, penetrating even the regions of barbarism, and dissipating ignorance and error, till it shed its beams over a civilized world, long since has passed its zenith, and is now going down the sky. They believe that English literature attained its highest pitch of perfection in a past age; after which, according to its essential laws, it necessarily receded.

Again, some persons, possessed of that happy disposition which predisposes them to believe that this world was fitted up with a special reference to themselves, and consequently, that they are thrown into the most auspicious era of the world's history, think that in the present is the perfection of letters, as of every thing else. They believe the highest achievements of human genius in art and literature to have taken place within their day, and doubt not they are enjoying the radiance of the noon-day sun.

While a third class is dissatisfied with all that is or has been; they look to the future with bright anticipations, and conceive a state of things corresponding to the perfectability of man: they look for a literature, which, in agreement with the new state of things, shall surpass the proudest achievements of ancient or modern genius.

Literature is subject to vicissitude. Its general history is written in a few words; *It rose,—It flourished, and declined*: and that embraces the whole of it. Here its career closes, and is sealed up forever. It is a solemn truth, that when a nation's literature

becomes corrupt, its sun sinks to rise no more. The virtue, the happiness, the liberty, and the glory of a nation, nay, its very existence, seem to depend upon a pure literature. The sparks of taste, when once extinguished, never rekindle again in the ashes, nor light again the altars of the same nation: all sinks into barbarism, and darkness prevails till art and letters break out afresh in another place, or commence a new era in another land.

Literature, like the seasons, is subject to vicissitude; like them it has its regular succession of production, improvement, perfection, and decay. In its time of production, the germs of thought seem to spring forth spontaneously, and the poet weaves the offsprings of his fancy and imagination into metrical forms, and melodious numbers, thus harmonizing the rough accents of his native tongue, and raising it from its chaotic state until he reduces its rude combinations to order. From these luxuriant productions of the poet, the orator forms his style, and rhetoric flourishes. Poetry first sprang from prose; but in vivifying the language, and imbuing it with beauty, poetry imparted every species of excellence to writing. Delicacy of sentiment, the choice and arrangement of words, which results in precision of thought, and harmony of construction, are derived from the poet. In more credulous times, his mission would have been thought divine, had he done no more than this: to raise his native tongue above common conversation, and to form the orator, the historian and the philosopher.

Then philosophy gathers up the observations of the past, and seeking out the causes of things, reduces

the mass to system. She improves upon all that has gone before her, in her search after truth, while poetic genius still emulates her in the production of beauty.

As art and science advance to perfection, genius abandons its own instincts, and is guided by caprice. Taste is *formed*, as well as cultivated, from the examination of models. Books are no longer written from nature, but from other books, and they reflect other men's thoughts, instead of nature.

When fame can be attained without the least genius, when for this purpose it is sufficient to display an intimate acquaintance with what has been written upon most subjects, and when volumes are made by drafts upon common place books, none readily deny themselves the distinction of authorship. Learned men rise up to preside over the arts and sciences, to rule in matters of taste and reason, as fast as colleges can confer degrees, or bestow distinctions of merit. These men, like Patroclus, clad in the armor of the heroes that have gone before them, make such a flourish, that simple, unadorned truth sinks in despair, or is scouted from the field.

The memory may be strengthened and enlarged by such exercises, but the mind remains undeveloped by the power of thought and reflection.

The fine arts, poetry, eloquence and history, addressing themselves to the imagination, and the heart, develop and cherish the finest sensibilities, and shed a lustre upon the age in which they flourish. Through these the spirit, the sentiment, and the genius of one age are transmitted to succeeding generations : in the

various forms of beauty they incarnate all of the past that is worthy of resuscitation, of immortality.

In honor of human nature, it is observed that a tragic effect can never be drawn from an incident which manifests the least tendency to immorality. However depraved human nature may be represented to be, it delights only in the contemplation of the beautiful and the good. The brightest fancy, the richest imagination, cannot give a lasting charm to vice. The poet or the artist that hopes for immortality, that is, to please and instruct the mind, of all succeeding time, must rest his hopes of success on his truthfulness to nature, to virtue, in the portraiture of the human passions and character.

Virtue forms that mysterious link which binds the soul to the beautiful in all her varied forms, and changeful shades. It unites the moral and physical worlds: between the rose, the rainbow, the placid stream, the serene firmament, and love, sensibility, the gentle spirit, and the magnanimous soul, it reveals an analogy. There is an affinity between the emotions which are excited by whatever is beautiful in nature or grand in art, and that beauty or grandeur.

Refined taste and the moral sense are allied to each other, and both being rooted in human nature, and governed by principles common to all mankind, they furnish an immutable standard for judgment.

Guided by these the largest scope may be given to fancy and imagination, and the productions of genius will always please. By yielding to its own impulses, it displays all that is affecting in the pas-

sions, and all that is beautiful in the aspects of nature: and in tracing the relations which exist among the affections, and the objects with which they are conversant, it explores the recesses of morality, and discovers the secret springs of all that is beautiful and good.

It cannot be too often remarked, nor too strongly enforced, that the relation which exists among our faculties, is such, that by improving our tastes we adorn and dignify our whole nature. As our sensibilities are refined, the springs of action become susceptible and elastic, and pure.

A refined taste opens to the mind a source of pleasure, as exhaustless as the stores of nature, and the productions of art. Develop the sensibilities of the soul, and it becomes alive to each fine impulse: it makes,

" All nature, beauty to his eye
Or music to his ear : well pleased he scans
The goodly prospect ; *and with inward smiles* '
Treads the gay verdure of the painted plain."—

Cultivate the seeds of love and admiration which are sown in every human breast, and every form of beauty charms the enlivened soul, and endows it with a richer treasure and an ampler state, than gems or gold can bestow :

" What e'er adorns
The princely dome, the column and the arch,
The breathing marble and the sculptured gold,
Beyond the proud possessor's narrow claim
His tuneful breast enjoys. For him, the Spring

Distils her dews, and from the sliken germ
Its lucid leaves unfold: for him, the hand
Of Autumn tinges every fertile branch
With blooming gold and blushes like the morn:
Each passing hour sheds tribute from her wings:
And still new beauties meet his lonely walk,
And loves unfelt attract him."

Taste affords an exhaustless source of pleasure; it chastens the passions, and induces independence and originality of thought and action. The mind meditating upon the charm and order of external things, returns to itself to seek a kindred state of things, and in this contemplation exalts itself to the grand design of Nature in which the lesser grades are subordinate to and aid the beauty and harmony of the great whole. It feels within itself a restive energy, and spurns the restraints of custom and caprice.

The beauties of language combine with, and increase, and sweeten all our pleasures derived from literary exercises. The refined taste relishes the fitness, the fine sequences, and the delicate modulation of words as sensibly as the cultivated ear enjoys the charm of music. If the charms of music are ever *wholly* independent of language, its fine harmonies always increase the effect of music, and being always in unison with, and responsive to the chords of melodious sensibility which the soul itself possesses, it chimes in with the varied melodies of nature, and is a source of constant pleasure.

As the improvement of taste increases our pleasures, so the progress of literature develops every species of generous emotion; and as literature advances, the products of genius and manners change.

The literature of a nation is as local in its nature, and as dependent upon the country in which it flourishes, as are the productions of the earth. It cannot be transplanted from another region and flourish at once : it must first naturalize itself to the soil, and the language become rooted in the affections. The soil, the scenery, the climate, the productions of the earth, and the treasures in its bosom, all contribute by natural causes, by determining the pursuits of men, to determine also the nature and form of their literature. Character itself, is not independent of the pursuits of mankind : difference of pursuit draws the line of distinction, and separates the sage from the savage, and the philosopher from the barbarian.

In the infancy of nations, as in youth, imagination is vigorous and active. When a nation takes possession of a new country whose scenery has never been described, romance and mystery attend upon all its movements : surprised and delighted with every thing it beholds, its intellectual creations partake of the spirit of the new world it has entered. The mind, excited by the new prospect, buoyant with hopes of the future, and freed in a great measure from artificial systems, yields to its own impulses, and the guidance of nature. The climate, acting upon the body and mind, in the course of time, modifies their organization and temperament ; and to these thus changed, the literature and language assimilate themselves ; that species of literature which is chiefly the offspring of the imagination springs up immediately,

while that which is the result of reflection is much longer in coming to maturity.

The natural growth of learning when first introduced into any country, is slow ; attempts in the arts and sciences are seldom at first attended with success ; numberless trials and experiments must be made to bring them from their embryo state to perfection.

The shadow of a man marked by the outlines, gave birth to painting and to sculpture." The first sketches are mere shadows, with a single color : it requires time to give them variety, design, and life. Poetry, the child of the imagination, springs up first, and matures soonest, of all the arts ; but it is not perfected in its spirit, form, and finish, by a single mind. It owes to language, which is the production of ages, some of its most exquisite beauties. The canvas does not speak to the imagination under a few rude touches of the pencil : beauty is not embodied in marble by a single stroke ; nor is sentiment incarnated in imperishable numbers, or thoughts fixed in permanent and symmetrical forms without time, and effort, as well as genius, and energy. The more stable the government, therefore, provided its stability is compatible with liberty, the more propitious it is to the arts and sciences, and the sooner they will advance to maturity.

Political revolutions interrupt the natural course of things, and learning, sympathising with the state of society, does not escape its perils,

The form of government does not seem to be material, provided it be permanent and free.

The order which is founded upon the subordination of *ranks*, begets in the privileged classes, elevated no-

tions of the dignity of man. Ambition to reign, in the higher *ranks* induces the cultivation of taste, and of a high finish. In the radiance of royal favor the arts and sciences flourish, and attain perfection sooner than in the democratic state. In the boasted equality of a democratic government it is said there is not so much to inflame pride, but more to nourish egotism.

But, on the other hand, as we all sustain the same relation to the political system, and stand on a level with our fellows, the only distinction to be attained in a democracy, is that which is founded upon intellectual and moral worth. Without any badge of station or robe of state, the professor mingles with his students, and the governor with the governed, while the noble and the doctor of the monarchy or aristocracy stand aloof, and are seen at a distance; so that taste and urbanity of manners are more necessary to the former, in order to gain esteem and maintain their dignity, than to the latter. Taste and amenity of manners engage the affection and esteem of the citizen, while lineage and display secure the loyalty of the subject.

Again, when reason and sentiment take the place of ceremony and parade, literature becomes simple, and yet various and abundant.

It is formed upon the true and durable relations of society, and having no visionary systems to support, its only object is truth; then sentiment and expression spring from the same source, and both are true to nature.

Prejudice, superstition and fixed forms limit the career of thought: but where the largest liberty prevails, the mind breaks from the common circle of ideas,

and explores new fields: from the novelty derived from new ideas, literature acquires an absorbing interest, without any of the studied graces which are unwelcome to the natural taste. This does not relish the ornaments of style, and the simplest expression, so it be forcible and natural, receives the suffrages of the citizen.

All despotism is prejudicial to genius: and no tyrant is more severe than public opinion. When the path of genius is marked out by the national spirit, the efforts of each individual tend to the same point, and there is great volume with little depth or variety of thought.

The connection between taste and the moral sense is indissoluble, and founded as they are upon human nature, and possessing the greatest susceptibility and activity, they form the basis of public opinion. From these general notions the characters and conduct of men derive their coloring. Glory, either national or individual, is relative in its nature: it denotes the achievement of the highest aspirations of the soul, or of the public mind, whatever that aspiration may be, whether to slay a rival, or benefit a friend; whether the slaughter of an enemy, or superiority in the arts and sciences. Yet this ideal being is the phantom which, in some shape, all are pursuing:

“ Whence is our love of fame, a love so strong
We think no changes great, nor labors long,
By which we hope our beings to extend,
And to remotest times in *glory* to descend.”

The institutions of society, its manners, and its literature are modified by the same causes which mould

the character, and determine the conduct of individuals. The man that possesses a darling notion, intrudes that upon every occasion : and when a nation is absorbed with one idea, its literature will be controlled by it, and will develop it in every form. Ancient literature possesses but few ideas, which is one reason why it is so perfect in form,—while modern literature, though far more fertile in thought, has never in artistic grace and completeness equalled its elder sister.

Before the mind is turned inward to reflect upon its own operations it cannot avoid being impressed with the aspects of the visible world, and the observation of nature is the first study in the early stages of society : the rising and going down of the sun, the changes of seasons, the variations of the atmosphere, are objects that frequently occupy the thoughts. It is natural for unenlightened reason to believe that these things which have such a sensible effect, are possessed of, or connected with, some mysterious powers, or being. Hence, men suppose that spirits reside in everything, or that there is one controlling power that instituted the arrangement, and conducts the movement of the world around them : they believe that there is a power above them,—and hence the idea of religion.

These notions spring up with the first seeds of learning, and check or advance its growth according to the nature of the notions adopted—that system which adapts itself to human nature, and develops the moral feelings, gives pathos, depth, and variety to literature. But literature is confined, and it cannot flourish even in these narrow limits, until the affec-

tions are developed. Every new *sensibility* that is awakened gives a new charm to literature.

Christianity addresses itself to the mind, and to the heart: it combines sentiment and reason; it elevates man in the scale of being, and at the same time unites him in feeling and interest with his fellow man. Love is the soul of Christianity, and it acts by sympathy, without the aid of force. Its free spirit is the bond which binds together, as with a chain of gold, men, societies, and nations. It chastens the passions; elevates the hopes, and sheds a lustre and a flood of light upon creation, and at the same time imparts dignity and spirituality to literature.

These are some of the causes which affect language and letters, but it is sufficient to glance at them. Language in its connection with literature, and the causes which affect it, may be compared to those instruments, the chords of which, diversified by the manner in which they have been spun, are also strung to different notes: touched by the same impulse, each chord gives forth the sound that is peculiar to itself, depending as it does upon its volume, its texture, its tension, and the momentary state of the air around. It is much in this way that the variety exhibited in the literature of different nations, is produced. There exists a striking variety in the minds, the passions, the energies, the taste, and the imagination of men: and a further distinction exists between nations, caused by the nature of their religion, government, climate, &c. When these natural and moral causes, by acting upon the body and mind, have produced their full legitimate effects in developing the national literature, it has

then attained its highest state, and cannot advance further. Its forms may change: it may appear in new combinations, but its spirit, its essence, must remain the same. Like a beam of light, no new element can be added, but it may give forth different colors by being thrown into new combinations. The first combination into which all these national elements enter in due proportion, assumes a form which cannot be essentially departed from, without changing its nature. The first genius that rises in a nation, acting under the influences peculiar to it, produces a national standard. When, instead of producing original works, comparable to this, writers devote themselves to criticism and commentary upon other works, "selecting a single author, and delivering their whole load of learning upon his back," there is but little more to expect in the advancement of letters among that people.

Under the auspicious influence of genius, the arts and sciences grow up together, and mutually shed light upon each other. When men without taste or genius become law-givers, the sciences lose solidity, and the polite arts grace; language becomes corrupted; philosophers dispute about *names*, and the poet ever straining after beauties, catches and presents us only tinsel.

Ancient systems were at variance with the true principles of taste: and learning is false, which is not founded upon the simple and durable relations of society. When all these systems are exploded, and society returns again to this simple and natural state, it

will possess the elements of truth and stability, whatever may be the form of government.

All happiness grows out of the practice of virtue, which depends upon truth; upon the knowledge of those unalterable relations that exist among things, and to which every thing by nature is ordained to submit itself. These relations, which form the basis of virtue, are the sources and measures of happiness, because they are wholly true. They are also the sources and the guides of our reasoning, of our intellectual operations. While we *conform* to these, and do not force nature, nor violate the order of her system by *conformity* to artificial regulations, literature will be durable and fresh as nature herself.

The fabrics of tyranny and superstition have received shocks from which they can never recover, and there are already seen glimmerings of light, which seem to be tokens of a purer and nobler literature than has yet existed.

Man begins to think, and act, from nature and reason alone: superstition under the sacred garb of religion is losing its hold upon the human mind; man dares to think for himself, and the refreshing breath of liberty which he feels, raises his ardor, and inspires him with undying aspirations, for a better state of things, for a higher condition of intellectual being.

The poets who have sung of the elysian fields, where all was beauty and life, only developed those germs of beauty which do not unfold themselves in other hearts: and in the progress of civilization a realm is at last reached where the visions of the poet

and the brightest dreams of the philosopher are undergoing a practical experiment.

" Westward the star of empire takes its way,
The first four acts already past,
The fifth shall end the drama with the day.
Time's noblest offspring is its last."

LANGUAGE.



Hail native *Language*, that by sinews weak,
Did move my first endeavoring tongue to speak,
And mad'st imperfect words with childish trips,
Half unpronounced, slide through my infant lips,
Driving dum silence from the portal door,
Where he had mutely sat two years before :
Here I salute thee.

MILTON.

We may define *language*, if we consider it more materially, 'to be letters forming and producing words and sentences ; but if we consider it according to the design thereof, then *language* is apt signs for communication of thought.

DENHAM.

Our ideas are transformed sensations.

CONDILLAC.

Language is the sensible portraiture or image of the mental process.

BACON.

It gives an intelligible form to the inward workings of the soul—utters its mightiest thoughts—assumes the nicest shades of its pleasurable and painful emotion. Nay, it sweeps over mysterious chords, existing in the souls of others and awakens sympathetic joy, grief, hope, and terror in the breasts of thousands,

It becomes eloquence, philosophy, and music.

PROFESSOR PROUDFIT.

O ! good my Lord, no Latin ;
I am not such a tyrant since my coming,
As not to know the *language* I have lived in.

SHAKESPEARE.

He not from Rome alone, but Greece,
Like Jason, brought the golden fleece.
To him that *language*, though to none
Of the others, as his own was known.

DENHAM.

Others for *language* all their care express,
 And value books, as women men, for dress :
 Their praise is still—the style is excellent ;
 The sense they humbly take upon consent.
 Words are like leaves ; and where they most abound,
 Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.

POPE.

Language, it is true, is an art, and a glorious one ; its influence extends over all others, and in which finally all science whatever must center.

HORNE TOOKE.

But as to words ; they seem to me to affect us in a manner very different from that in which we are affected by natural objects, or by painting or architecture ; yet words have as considerable a share in *exciting ideas of beauty* and of the sublime, as any of those and sometimes much greater than any of them.

BURKE.

One of the greatest of those obstacles which beset the pathway of learning, dampning our zeal, and wrongly directing our energies, is the numberless branches into which education is divided, each demanding attention, and at the same time that they appear to sustain but remote relations to one another. The term of human life is so short at the best ; and the variety of objects which engage our attention so great, that after every subject has been thoroughly investigated, and every science mastered, there is but little time left to act, and to apply our knowledge to practice.

Thus distracted with a multiplicity of objects, and eager to advance, it is not wonderful that there is so little success in education, and so few proficients in any department of learning. But it is strange that there should be so many who “know a little of every thing else, and nothing of their native tongue,” because all true learning depends upon this : and it is a subject which is within the reach of all, and can be mastered by all.

Too much depends upon language to neglect it with safety. Our own senses acquaint us only with this little scene immediately around us: we fill but a small space, and occupy but a moment of time, in the world's great drama, and language is to be, as it were the great mirror in which the Universe is to be reflected, and her hidden laws revealed. There, as by enchantment, the events of all time shall be exhibited, and the genius and wisdom of all ages gather together and display their stores, and no less of our language than others; such is the nature of language; formed, as it is from different dialects; embodied in literature, and connected with the events of past ages, the study of its history and philosophy opens a field sufficiently ample for the employment of our powers, and furnishes a means to discipline the mind, while at the same time the greatest amount of real and valuable learning can be most readily obtained. Nothing can be more pleasing than the study of our literature in this light: and when we look upon every thing connected with it, as conspiring to a single object,—its progress and perfection,—it then becomes the nucleus, as it is indeed the mirror of knowledge, around which collect the emanations of genius, and the gems of learning, so that it forms the center of one harmonious and luminous system of thought.

When we cast our eye along the golden chain of philosophical analogy, and observe how each additional increase of knowledge can be formed into a bright and shining link, and so lengthen the chain of thought till it extends through all our attainments, the

difficulty before remarked is removed, and we are prepared to thrice successfully the mysterious labyrinth of learning.

Thus the study of the language in its highest and most appropriate sense, strengthens the intellect, and enlarges the understanding : it is thus that the extent of human knowledge, and the accuracy of human thought proceed in equal steps with the accuracy and the extent of language.

When language is considered as the instrument of the mind, it assumes powers subtle and sublime as the mind itself. This spiritual connection imparts power to thought, and imbues it with life and immortality. In the mysterious exercise, of the mind and heart, words are like sunbeams, scintillations of the essence from the fountain of light and thought.

The narration of mere facts is not the only office which language performs : it acts in a higher and nobler capacity. While it is confined to narration, or reasoning, it is weak, uncertain and often contradictory.

In the incipient stage of our thoughts, they are unconnected with words ; they are simply ideals or images. When the form of expression is such that it withdraws the attention from the words to these ideals, and traces the relations that exist among them, it reaches the high recesses of thought and feeling, and language is changed and transfigured by the volatile essence of sentiment. Then its elements appear to be not only the types of material things, but the vital transcripts of mind itself.

When language reaches beyond the limits of sensible



things, and calls up these ideals, these spiritual creations, it is in itself poetry of the highest cast ; it elicits thought and feeling, and combines and reflects beauty, for the world of fancy and feeling is subjected to its dominion : and its combinations are modulated, refined and sublimated so as to embody the infinite emanations of truth and beauty.

Language in the hands of a master mind is a wonderful instrument : it is the arm of intellectual power : and accomplishes with the moral world what Archimides proposed to do with the physical : it moves and commands the world of mind. Yet it is neglected and considered a matter of no great importance. This insensibility, however, is proportionate to our familiarity with things.

Earth and heaven, and the wonders of celestial scenery no longer call forth those thrilling and mingled emotions of beauty, of grandeur, and glory, which they are calculated to inspire : and so it is with the divine institution of language, and we seem even to forget that it is the receptacle of all beautiful forms and images, while it is more wonderful than the fabled wand of enchantment ; and more powerful, to call up the airy forms of fairy land ; to wake the fancy, and touch the heart ; to sway the passions, calm the tumult of conflicting elements, and control the mind.

Our native tongue may not have the grace and melody of the Italian, nor the vivacity of the French, or its powers to express abstract thought ; it has not the stately grandeur of the Latin, nor the flexibility

of the Greek, yet it has sweeter and dearer associations for us, and it has been enriched from all of these, and it is surpassed by none in nerve, copiousness and sublimity.

It is generally supposed that the English language is inferior to those languages whose words admit of inflection: this opinion prevails so generally that our language always suffers by comparison. But it is as unfounded as it is general.

The majesty and pomp, even of the Latin, by the frequent occurrence of similar sounds dwindles into sameness and insipidity. It admits of great latitude in the arrangement of words, in the construction of a sentence, but it cannot vary the form of expression. It does not admit of so great a variety of sounds as the English, nor is it capable of such an harmonious diversity of tones.

There is a beautiful variety in Latin between the different parts of the same verb: as "*amo*," "*amabam*," "*amaveram*," "*amavero*," and "*amem*," which the English translations of them; "*I love*," "*I did love*," "*I had loved*," "*I shall have loved*" and "*I may love*," do not possess. But when we compare different verbs with one another, in each of these languages, there is the most striking distinction in favor of the latter. It was impossible for the Latins to form a particular set of inflections for each different word, and the verbs amounting to upwards of four thousand, are reduced to four conjugations, and this must necessarily introduce a greater similarity of sounds into the language than where every particular

verb retains its own peculiar sound. Again, alliteration has been scouted from the English; but Cicero's famous poetical line is open to as great an objection from an inherent defect in the sameness of form.

"O, fortunatam natam me consule Romam."

The music of such poetry might put one to sleep, but it could never wake the deep and varied emotions of the human heart.

Objection is often made also, to the English, because it abounds in monosyllables; but this, if closely considered, will not seem to be a defect, but rather a beauty. In the Latin there are but two expressions for the present of the indicative, viz: "*amo*," and "*Ego amo*;"—and these are strictly but one expression,—whereas in the English it can be varied almost at pleasure, viz: "*I love*," "*I do love*," "*love I do*," "*love do I*." These forms vary from the grave to the gay, from the serious to the ludicrous, and produce a fine effect in works of humor and burlesque. The effect of these forms may be further varied by placing the emphasis on different words.

Besides the variety which these various forms display, the monosyllable "*do*," is often used as an intensive word with great effect, and imparts a force and energy to the expression that cannot be produced by a single word. The following line from Shakspeare's Othello is an example of this kind.

"Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul,
But I *do* love thee! and when I love thee not,
Chaos is come again!"

That the whole energy of this expression depends upon this single monosyllable will be seen by omitting it, and reading the passage without it ; thus,

“ Excellent wretch ! Perdition catch my soul,
But I love thee ; and when I love thee not,
Chaos is come again.”

This is tame and weak, and does not at all convey the state, the pressure, of the speaker's mind.

These peculiarities in the verb, make the English language superior to most others in force and precision. It enables us to point out the different words, and to place the emphasis on those we please, which gives the expression a distinctness, and an energy, it could not have without this assistance.

The sense is often enigmatical in the Latin, and perplexity often arises from the defect of the declension, where the same termination is employed for different cases of the same noun. This difficulty in English is removed, and the clearest light shines upon every sentence by the use of prepositions which are for a great part, monosyllables also.

These in the hands of a master do not confine the arrangement, but admit of the greatest latitude, as may be seen from the style of Milton ;

“ Of man's first disobedience and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat ;
Sing heavenly muse.”

The transposition of this sentence is great enough to accommodate any expression, and it is as plain and distinct, as it could be, if the relations of its parts were determined by inflections.

It must be conceded therefore to the English language that it possesses a greater variety of sounds, that it has more force and greater precision and copiousness, than the Latin, and we believe most other languages. It is exceedingly simple in all of its forms, and beautifully natural in its construction.

It has nerve and spirit too. If genius, in the Latin language, is compared to a giant, with a firm and stately tread, in the English it may be said :—

“It walks the waters like a thing of life,
And seems to dare the elements to strife.”

If, in the Greek, he is compared to the eagle soaring toward the sun—in the English, in his flight,

“He rode, sublime,
On the seraph wings of ecstasy,
The secrets of the abyss to spy ;
He passed the flaming bounds of space and time—
The living throne—the sapphire blaze—
Where angels tremble, as they gaze.”

The study of our language, without regard to the beauty and value of its literature, is pleasing as well as profitable. It contains all the associations that are most dear to us ; the entrancing dreams of youth, and the visions of riper years are connected with it. In its origin and development we behold as in a mirror, the origin and history of our Anglo-Saxon race ; there our intellectual emanations, like sun-beams, have been converged and reflected. And in its present

state, and future prospects, we read our condition and our destiny.

Etymology, besides the precision and purity which its study induces, furnishes a key to the mysteries of the obscure origin of nations; their laws, their customs, and their language; and such a study is not altogether unimportant in the minutest particulars. There is much to excite curiosity in the derivation and the relationship of words: to trace each root through all its connections and branches, expanding like the tree, rising from a single cion, till it is full of foliage and fruit. To learn the history of a single word is as important, if not as instructing, as to trace a splendid hero through a novel. Its origin, relationship, and the circumstances that have conspired to fix its character, fill its history with the elements of romance. Its birth was accompanied by some revolution, some accession to the domain of knowledge, or some improvement in the arts and sciences. Each one of these individuals of the republic of letters is a person of importance; each has its history, and a thrilling story to tell, and, like the beautiful sea-shell—

“Apply

Its polished lips to your attentive ear,

And it remembers its august abodes

And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.”

A PERFECT LANGUAGE.



Scholar. I wish to be most deeply learn'd,
And would, all-willingly, pursue
All things in earth or heaven discern'd
In science and in nature too.

Mephistopheles. You're in the right direction here ;
But keep your thoughts unbent and clear.

Sch. I'll give the task all heart and mind ;
But yet sometimes would gladly play,
For relaxation, when I find
A sunny summer's holiday.

Meph. But use all time within your reach,
So rapidly it passes by.
Order, indeed, will always teach
The way to gain on hours that fly.
For this, then, I should wish to make
You first a course of logic take ;
For 'tis an art by which the mind
Is nicely fetter'd and confin'd !
Laced up in Spanish boots, it creeps
Discreetly o'er the paths of thought,
And here and there no longer sweeps
Like marsh-lights by the breezes caught.
Then many an hour will be spent
In teaching what you once could get,
By the first glance you lent,
As truly as you drank or eat ;
But one—two—three—you now must learn,
Are needed ere you can discern.

* * * * *

Sch. But still some meaning with the *word* must be.

Mepå. 'Tis true ! but one must never care to spend
Too much anxiety or toll on this ;
For, just where meaning fails, the *word* will send
Its aid in time that cannot come amiss.
With *words* we safely may dispute—
On *words* we can a system lay ;
With our belief, words nicely suit,
And from a word can nought be took away.

Goethe.

The art of reasoning is, in truth, only a *well-constructed language*, because the order of our ideas is itself only the subordination which exists among the names given to genera and species ; and since we obtain new ideas only because we form new classes, it is evident that we shall only determine ideas, inasmuch as we shall determine what belongs to each class. Then we shall reason well, because analogy will lead us in forming judgments as well as in understanding *words*.

CONDILLAC.

Men believe that their reason governs their words ; but it often happens that words have power to react on reason.

BACON.

The accuracy of human thought, and the extent of human intellect, proceed in equal steps with the accuracy and extent of language.

LOCKE.

It has become a common practice to complain of the system of education, and as the efforts which have been made to remove the cause of the complaint, have generally resulted only in increasing the number of books, thereby aggravating, rather than removing, the defect, it is to be expected that a renewal of this complaint will be viewed with distrust or indifference. It is, however, impossible to reject the results which are drawn from experience, and it may be pardonable not to withhold our convictions.

The defect complained of is a radical one, and deeply seated ; its effects, therefore, are co-extensive with the influence of education.

Unfortunately, the operations of the mind are in a great measure controlled by the caprices of usage, which seem to admit of no doubt, nor readily suffer an examination ; and it is the more fatal to truth, inasmuch as the mind is averse to see its own defects, and too much taken up with the external world to reflect upon itself. To the mass of mankind, nothing is more laborious than to think for themselves; and they will not entertain a thought that conflicts with the common sentiment: and, under the influence of strong passions which are deeply seated in the human breast, and common to all mankind, error is often respected more than truth.

To observe relations, and to correct our judgments by new observations, is what nature caused us to do, before habit shackled our thinking faculties, and learning became a clog to reason; but we have forgotten these early teachings, and instead of observing the relations of things we desire to know; without observation we endeavor to imagine realities and their connections, or seek them in books. Commencing thus, and proceeding from one supposition to another, we inevitably involve ourselves in a multitude of errors, and the mind is so strongly attached to its own notions and conceptions, that it converts them into prejudices, and embraces them as immutable principles.

The inveterate habits of the human mind are displayed in the different opinions of nations; prejudice and superstition have spread on all sides their false, absurd, and contradictory ideas, and errors multiply

with the disorders they create, from the rise to the decline of empires. Even in those ages which claim to be enlightened, there is seen but little light. Their laws are seldom good ; and their duration is as short as their legislation is unwise. The spirit of philosophy is impregnated with error, and the thinking faculties are perverted. The boundaries of knowledge are not extended, for the mind, revolving in the circle of its favorite ideas, never goes out in search of truth for its own sake, but rather seeks to confirm some notion, or vanquish some adversary. It vainly supposes itself free, till it attempts to rise, or turn from the beaten track, when it feels its chains, and finds that only a part of its powers are developed.

These errors spring from the habit of using words before we know their meaning. In our youth, we repose implicit confidence in the teachings of others, and thus thinking through them, we adopt all their prejudices. The farther they are removed from the truth, the greater the charm they seem to possess. It is difficult to believe that the words which are so familiar, express ideas differing from those for which they stand in our own minds, or that they really signify nothing that exists in nature, and have become planted in the mind, serving only to generate errors which are sure to mix with all our subsequent attainments.

The passionate devotion to sects and parties, which has always been indulged, tends to corrupt language, and enslave the mind ; their object is not truth, but singularity ; they give to words that signification which

agrees with their own peculiar systems. Ambitious to rule, they agitate frivolous questions, and create distinctions which have no existence in nature or reason. They create new terms which have no signification, except such as they are pleased to give them ; in the rage for distinction and power, logic and philosophy are perverted ; law and religion are insulted ; and the affairs of mankind, and the interests of society, are involved in doubt, disorder and confusion.

It is as impossible to convince a partisan, or sectarian, of an error in his system, as it is to annihilate the language which is most familiar to his mind. He has never recurred to the origin of the ideas, the reality of which he supposes he has demonstrated. He has never for a moment troubled himself about the things themselves ; he has seen them only as they appear in books, and if any difficulties occur, they are easily explained away by the peculiar dialect of his creed.

The mind always thinks according to the habits which its own language has caused it to contract.

We cannot free our notions from its influence a moment ; it is the rule of our judgments, and in fact constitutes all our knowledge, shapes our opinions, and colors our prejudices.

If it were correct itself, it would never lead the mind astray ; it is not in the nature of the mind to prefer a lie to the truth ; such a preference results from habit. The mind from bad habits and bad education, becomes filled with little else besides errors, and to be in the light of truth, would be to disperse them all and leave the mind a blank. 'Truth is a naked and open

daylight, in which the masques, and mummeries, and triumphs of the world do not seem half so stately and exquisite as they did by candle lights. Our common notions are like pearls which appear best by night, not like diamonds or carbuncles, that show best in varied lights.'

It is this mixture of error that inflates the mind with vain opinions, flattering hopes, and false imaginations. The golden dreams of youth fill it with vagaries, which it is hard even for riper years to discard.

Poetry, too, fills the imagination with shadows and ideas of unreal things.

Such is the state of things amid which language has grown up, and it could hardly be otherwise than imperfect. If philosophers had presided over its formation, it would not have been much better constructed, unless they had been better philosophers than have yet been known. They too, are blinded by their passions, and impelled by the force of habit. They have suspected this, and tried to relieve themselves by resorting to definitions, and these have been the basis of their reasoning. Therefore, they end where they commenced, by supposing that the thing which they wish to find is already known. Dictionaries are open to the same objection, and consist of a heap of definitions which may serve to show the extent of our vocabulary, and display the variety of shades, the doubt, the uncertainty, and confusion which are involved, but they determine nothing ; they suppose that the meaning of words is known, and if nothing is supposed—nothing is understood.

It is sufficient for our present purpose to observe that all the materials of reason and knowledge are derived from experience. Our observation is occupied with external, sensible objects, or with the internal operations of our minds; and these are the sources which supply the mind with the materials of thought. By impulse, or action, the external world creates, or calls up ideas in us, varying according to the mode in which the various objects affect us, and, our ideas will be distinct in proportion as sensation is delicate. The other class of ideas,—those arising from reflection, &c., depend for their distinctions upon the notice which the mind takes of its own operations. Ideas, therefore, are furnished from objects without, according to the variety they present, and from the operation of the mind within, from the attention bestowed on it; but unless the mind is turned in upon itself, and considers attentively the materials of its knowledge, and analyzes them, as it would the various features that make up the landscape, or the parts which form a machine, reflection will furnish it with no clear and distinct ideas.

A picture or a piece of mechanism may be in its presence for years, and yet its conception of the parts will be confused, and far different from the complete idea which the painter, or artificer would possess. Ideas of reflection are the fruits of attention. They come late in life, and some minds never possess them at all. There are for all men, probably, floating visions, which pass through the mind without making an impression strong enough to leave distinct ideas. But

those who have lived without steady attentive reflection,—who have not made the internal operations of their own minds, objects of careful contemplation, are like children, who seeing everything about them as new, and surrounded with a world of unknown objects, by the solicitation of their senses, are drawn rapidly from one object to another, and are delighted with a variety of things, without observing any one of them particularly.

Ideas are therefore obscure from a variety of causes. Dull organs never convey distinct impressions; when the impressions are slight and transient, so that the memory does not retain them well, the ideas are necessarily obscure. Thus, ideas, with reference to themselves, are distinct or obscure; and even if distinct, too commonly confusion arises among them when we attach names to them. This arises from the arbitrary nature of the name; there being no natural connection between the name and the idea it represents, the distinction which was intended to be established, is easily lost sight of, and the idea escapes.

It is thus difficult to seize even a simple idea, and attach to it a significant sign or word. But complex ideas are yet more fugitive. They are still more liable to confusion. It is extremely difficult to combine in a single sign all the simple ideas which constitute the complex one, and when only a part of them are seized, error of course occurs, for in that case those will be left out which made it deserve a different name. To define it by general terms only increases the confusion. It destroys the distinction upon which alone

certainty rests. Until the precise signification of a word is determined, it is used indiscriminately to express any part or portion of the simple ideas it was intended to express in combination; whence, endless confusion arises. The complex idea annexed to any name is distinct and clear, according as the simple ideas of which it is composed are certain, their number determinate, and their order well arranged; for it is by these that it is kept separate and apart from all other ideas, attached to other names, and ideas that are constantly passing from one term to another, exchange their significance as well as their relation, and cannot be said to belong to any name, or to have any determinate meaning.

Some ideas have strong affinities, and are allied by nature; others are combined in the mind voluntarily, or by chance. Were ideas equally distinct and clear in different minds, and the same relations always attached to them, men would not differ so much in their notions and opinions, nor would they arrive at such different and contradictory conclusions in their reasoning. As it is, their interests, their inclinations, their education, in a word their habits, control them. Accustomed to attach certain relations to certain ideas, and to connect them with a particular system, and it being natural for our faculties to receive a greater aptitude to act in the manner they have before acted, it is difficult to change the impulse, and at length an invincible attachment is contracted for what at first was merely arbitrary, or the result of accident; and our notions, or chains of reasoning proceed at the sugges-

tion of a single idea, as mechanically as a familiar tune passes through the mind at the suggestion of a single note. This is the effect of our intellectual habits in the association of ideas.

A correct language affords an efficient remedy for these evils; and further, it furnishes the elements for the art of reasoning itself.

Correct reasoning grows out of, or is founded upon, the just and natural relation of our ideas; but this relation will depend mainly upon the mode in which we use words. If we conduct the process of reasoning in the order of the formation of language, we shall proceed in a manner that will never lead us astray. There is nothing in nature but individual objects, distinct things. General and abstract ideas exist alone in the mind, without any archetypes in nature; they are therefore not the elements of the art of reasoning, but have served rather to confuse it, by suggesting relations which do not belong to the things themselves. To argue that classes and kinds could not exist without abstract ideas, and that we could not reason without the former, is to insist that nature cannot exist as it is without a peculiar notion in the mind, and that the art of reasoning is a mere series of fictions. We often see men, who make no pretensions to learning, reason well; and while they remain in their own sphere, they are generally correct; this is sufficient to lead us to suspect that nature has provided such men with means of reasoning, and has suggested the true use of them.

Language was exact as long as it concerned itself with things relative to the first wants of man. It was

then constantly corrected by experience. But when it deviated into the regions of philosophy and imagination, errors accumulated, and by degrees became confirmed and legalized.

It was then contracted, and possessed but few elements, yet, when it spoke, its tones were clear and distinct: then it *never spoke without saying something*, and never spoke *only to utter absurdities*.

Had philosophers attempted in the right spirit to perfect it, they would have continued it as it commenced. They would have furnished themselves with new ideas, and sought new words in analogy, and language would have remained exact.

This is true now, and will eternally hold true with regard to the attainment of every mind.

If the language in which one's knowledge is couched be not exact, his ideas are but floating visions, which make no impression, or they are so vague that nothing useful can come of them, and they only lumber the mind with useless trash.

Had it been possible for language to have been created, and completed, under the care of the arts and sciences, it would have been exact. If it had borrowed none of its elements from any other source, but had been formed as necessity required, the history of language would be the same with the history of learning. In its formation and progress we should see the origin and generation of knowledge.

Analogy would always shed a clear light upon the acceptance of words, and we should know how to speak with precision.

The prevalence of a correct language among men would be the triumph of truth on earth. Wranglings would in a measure cease, men would not so often be imposed upon by their passions, subtlety would not be dignified with the name of learning, nor would a profusion of words pass for extensive knowledge: above all, the sciences generally would take a stand with mathematics, they too would be exact. The doubt and confusion in which they are involved, exist in their language, and not in nature.

The truths of all sciences are capable of demonstration, when we know their language; in all the process is the same; we proceed by a series of relations from the known to the unknown. Our ideas approach as the expression is simplified, and when they are brought together, the conclusion flows immediately from their relations.

Algebraic language shows in the most sensible manner, how one judgment flows successively from another, and the demonstration rests exclusively upon the accuracy and completeness of the language. If words cannot express algebraic truth with as much ease and simplicity as signs, they nevertheless can perform the same office, and the result will be as certain whether we use signs or words, if our words are correct.

If therefore, the sciences are not all exact and capable of a rigorous demonstration, it is not because they are incapable of demonstration, but because their language is not correct: they speak a gibberish that means anything, or nothing. They do not enlighten the

mind, and develop one's natural powers, but teach him a dialect, which is common to no other subject on earth, and he goes out with hampered faculties, and reason blind. Language is composed of far too many words, some of which have no determined meaning, while others are foreign, or barbarous.

The progress of the sciences, and through them, the triumph of truth, depends upon the improvement of the languages. When they shall be reduced to one common, simple, and correct language, this consummation will be effected. Meanwhile, an analytical method, strictly adhered to, in all our thoughts and intellectual exercises, will in part, conduct us to the truth we seek. Analogy will shed a clear light upon our pathway. The order of nature cannot well be reversed, and this will lead us from the origin of language, to the development of literature and science.

ORIGIN OF THE LANGUAGE.



When *language* has attained that perfection to which it arrives in the progress of society, the speculative mind, in comparing the first and the last stages of the progress, feels the same sort of amazement with a traveler, who after rising insensibly on the slope of a hill, comes to look down from a precipice, to the summit of which he believes he could not have ascended without supernatural aid.

DR. FERGUSON.

As for myself, alarmed at these multiplying difficulties and convinced of the almost demonstrable impossibility of language having been formed and established by means merely human, I leave to others the discussion of the problem, whether a society already formed, was more necessary for the institution of language, or a language already invented, for the establishment of society.

ROUSSEAU.


The same *element* conveys the same fundamental idea, through all languages, within the sphere of its acknowledge affinity ; from which probably no form of speech now spoken on the face of the globe is altogether excluded.

WHITER.

Hence we may infer that language was bestowed on Adam in the same manner as all his other faculties and knowledge, by supernatural power : or in other words was of divine origin.

WEBSTER.

The origin of language is a delicate question ; and so evenly balanced are the evidences with regard to its human or divine institution, that it can never be settled beyond a doubt, and it has been truly said that there will be something left concerning it for the remotest posterity to speculate upon.



If it is indeed the invention of man, he needs no other evidence to sustain his superior rank and dignity in the scale of being. Although reason has ever been regarded, and is still to be looked upon, as the great characteristic that entitles him to his distinction, yet the possession of language, even by endowment, would secure to him all that he claims, to say nothing of the wonderful conception of inventing it. For after making due allowance for the zeal and enthusiasm of devotees in tracing analogies, in discovering beauties, and magnifying its astonishing powers, there is truth enough still to excite admiration, and to increase our wonder at every step, as we trace it back to its primitive elements, without supposing that from the foundation its structure, its nature, and design were conceived by the human mind.

The language of action, that is, signs, are sufficient for the early natural wants: the child has ideas long before it speaks, and when it does speak, it imitates sounds it has heard, without any regard to their meaning. But if there were no sounds to imitate, it is by no means clear that it would of its own accord utter them, and in process of time attach definite meanings to them.

From the literal and obvious interpretation of the Mosaic narrative, it is not necessary to suppose, as Mr. Webster says, that Adam was endowed with speech as soon as he was created, or at any particular moment of time: but it is more reasonable to suppose that his powers of speech were developed gradually, according to the laws of his constitution. If he associa-

ted with a superior order of beings, why may he not have acquired the elements of speech from them by imitation?

It does not clear the matter entirely to refer the origin of language directly to God. This disposition of it not only conflicts with the notions we delight to entertain of the dignity and intellectual capacity of man, but does not well comport with our conception of his Creator.

After all that we can conceive concerning the nature and wonderful capacity of language, when we come to look upon it as the immediate emanation from the Divine Mind, we instinctively demand a perfection and capacity which it does not possess.

We then look for those beautiful and certain laws, which He always institutes, regulating its internal structure, harmonizing all its parts, and adapting each part to the perfect execution of its great design: and we are incredulous till we recognize that impress which is inscribed upon all His works as in letters of light. While this internal evidence of a Divine origin is wanting, it must still be ascribed to man, and this ascription will be enough to elevate him near to an equality with the higher order of beings.

Language, like man, is of the earth, earthly: the latter, in his natural state, possesses but few principles that tend to elevate him above this world: so language does not contain a single word whose primitive signification does not refer directly to, or is not derived directly from, the earth. It is only by inference and construction, that they are made to look

beyond this world. Man is the center of the system of language, and the earth is the source of its ideas. The term *soul* is the Saxon *sawl*, wind or breath, and only denotes a quality, the most ethereal of sensible objects. Mind is the Saxon *gemind*, denoting strength, and that not independent of, nor unallied to physical organization. And *heaven* is from *heofen*, the Saxon verb, to heave or *set up*. Man is the center of the system ; because he is the point from which language proceeded in its formation, and from which the Universe has been surveyed.

It is a beautiful theory, * to suppose that there is a single word in every language from which all other words are deduced ; that the particular language contains one from which all are derived, or upon which their meaning depends ; for instance, that the consonants contained in the term *earth*, enter into, by their various powers derived from combination, all other words of the English language, and that the various modifications that are made, are effected by, or relate to the changes of the earth. If such beautiful laws were impressed on language, and were certain, and could be traced through all their ramifications, they would indeed reduce it to a system both simple and sublime.

When we rise from the survey of a single language, remembering how much confusion it is supposed to involve, to survey the vast number and variety of languages and dialects that are spoken by the inhabitants of the globe, it would seem as if the earth were indeed a Babel of confused and contradictory tongues ; yet this system reduces them all to order : and by the

* See note A at the end of this vol.

same principle, differing only to the eye and the ear, the *elements*, the cognate consonants, or commutable letters retain their peculiar power, however, they may change their relation or form. The letters formed by the same organs may be changed for one another: as B, F, M, P, V, and W—D, F, Th, and S—G, C, K, and Q—R, L, and D: that is, labials may be changed for labials, and dentals for dentals. To try the theory on the first word that occurs; the word *have* is written variously, *habban* in the Saxon, *haben* in the German, *avoir* in the French, *avere* in the Italian, *haber* in the Spanish, *habeo* in the Latin, and *εχω* in Greek. The liqued sounds or vowels only assist in enunciation, producing melody, and are to be rejected in determining the power of a word: this done and it will be seen that *v* is the leading element in the examples given. The cognate letters run thus: *h v* in the English, *vr* in French, *vr* in Italian, *hb* in Latin, Saxon and Spanish, and *χ* in Greek: the *b* and the *χ* belonging to the same class with *v*, and therefore, possess the same power. And the power of the word “*have*” must be deduced from the power of *v*. If all the words into which *v* enters as a leading element are found to possess modifications of the same power, it will confirm the truth of the theory above noticed; though whether it is as fanciful as it is beautiful when thoroughly tested, is left for the doctors to determine. That it possesses truth enough to give interest to such an investigation, not even the doctors themselves will doubt. It furnishes at least a *kind of demonstration* that language is not entirely that

arbitrary thing that it is declared to be by some. True, it adapts itself to circumstances, it changes radically to the eye and ear, but its fundamental element remains the same. Like the sensible Universe, its varieties are always the same elements considered in new relations. its changes are only the changes of the spirit's robe, not changes of the essential soul. It serves to demonstrate that language, after the learned rubbish, which has been accumulating upon it for ages, is removed, becomes a natural study, allied to nature, and governed by innate laws, instead of the caprices of custom, or the edicts of doctors.

The dispute as to the Northern origin of the English language has been renewed of late with a good deal of zeal. Criticism has revealed defects in the argument in favor of its true Saxon birth, and ostensibly has overthrown it: but it has set up nothing whatever in its place. The logic employed works well with a subject that runs back "into the depths of antiquity," and seems to prove that the Saxon language itself was derived from the Latin and Greek. But supposing we adopt an analogous proposition, referring to modern times, viz: the languages of the North American Indians have been written and printed by means of an alphabet derived from the English, therefore, they derived their language from the English, and will derive from them their literature, if they should ever have any. This proposition shows, at first sight, that it is necessary to look further for the origin of a language than its alphabet, and is all the answer that such an argument merits.

A truce with theories and metaphysical distinctions : we propose to trace the origin and progress of our language as it has come down in our literature, and shall go no farther into "the depths of antiquity" than is necessary to exhibit a clear and entire view of it. The elements of a single language are scattered far and wide : and are to be sought out from a great profusion and variety : it is not possible and would not be profitable to follow out every ramification, and seek the source of each word, and such a multitude of questions presses in upon us that it is necessary to confine our remarks to a simple view.

The progress of the language as it has come down to us since its formation, may be compared to that of a mighty stream. It rises from a single fountain, or gushes from the rocks in the deep forest, and winds its feeble course through mountainous obstructions on every side, which tower to the heavens, till at last, it gathers strength from tributaries, and gradually expanding itself, and deepening its channel, it flows from the mountains into the plain, where, from the richness imparted to the soil, the lilly and the rose soon smile upon its borders, and the productions of genius are reflected from its surface. In surveying the flood of English Literature, it is easy for us to imagine ourselves ascending a magnificent yet unexplored stream. Now its clear waters reflect the sunbeams of genius into gems, and changeful stars; and now mirror in their bosom the overhanging firmament with its suns and planets. The names that shine forth in the literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are like

the stars that form the milky way; each one contributes to the stream of light, but is itself lost in the universal blaze. In the sixteenth century the language is yet unsettled, but a few great names appear conspicuous.

In the fifteenth, learning stagnated, and contains but little that is sparkling or permanently bright; but the genius of Chaucer shed a dim lustre upon the age that preceded it; he reduced the rude combinations of his native tongue to some order, and commenced the era of vernacular literature. As we pass from this age, we find the language in an unformed state. It reflects no beauty, it sheds no light. It is rather like the commingling of different streams falling from different mountains, and filled with sediment,—too disturbed to reflect even the beams of the noon-day sun.

Back in the ages of barbarism we find three different dialects contributing to the formation of the English language, viz: the Saxon, (a) the Danish and the Nor-

(a) Hickes, in his *Anglo Saxon Grammar*, states that there are three dialects of the Saxon language distinguishable from the pure and regular language of which he has already treated, namely, that found in the authors who flourished in the southern and western parts of Britain. These dialects he arranges according to certain periods of history, as follows: 1. The *Britanno Saxon*, which, he says, was spoken by our ancestors from the original invasion of Britain till the entrance of the Danes, being about three hundred and thirty-seven years. 2. The *Dano-Saxon*, which he says was used from the entrance of the Danes till the Norman invasion, being two hundred and seventy-four years, and more especially in the northern parts of England and the south of Scotland. 3. The *Normanno-Dano-Saxon*, spoken from the invasion by the Normans till the time of Henry II., which towards the end of that time, he says, might be termed *Semi-Saxon*. Writers of considerable eminence appear to have considered this arrangement of the dialects as a complete history of the language, without adverting to the circumstance of Hickes' distinguishing them all from the pure and regular language which is the primary subject of the work. From this partial view, a notion has become current, that the *Dano-Saxon* dialect previously to or during the reigns of the Canutes, became the general language of this country, and that our present language was formed by gradual alterations, superinduced upon the Dano-Saxon. This being taken for granted, it has appeared easy to decide upon the antiquity of some of the existing remains.

man. The land we are now on, in fancy, on whose soil and beneath whose sky began the formation of our English language, is Britain. Into her changeful climate, and romantic scenery, flowed three successive waves of immigration. From three various dialects was produced by degrees a language having something in common with each, but vastly superior to either. It was not the peaceful production of physical

Poems written in Dano-Saxon have been of course ascribed to the Dano-Saxon period; and *Beowulf*, and the poems of *Caedmon*, have been deprived of that high antiquity which a perusal of the writings themselves inclines us to attribute to them, and referred to a comparatively modern era.

With all due respect for the learning of the author of *Thesaurus*, it may be said, that he has introduced an unnecessary degree of complexity on the subject of the dialects. His first dialect, the Britanno-Saxon, may be fairly laid out of the question. The only indisputable specimen of it, according to his account, is what he calls 'a fragment of the true *Caedmon*' preserved in *Alfred's* version of *Bede*,—a poem which has nothing in language or style to distinguish it from the admitted productions of *Alfred*. Dismissing the supposed Britanno-Saxon as unworthy of consideration, the principal remains of the Saxon language may be arranged into two classes, viz: those which are written in *pure Anglo-Saxon*, and those which are written in *Dano-Saxon*. These, in fact, were the two great dialects of the language. The former was used, as *Hickes* observes, in the southern and western parts of England; and the latter in the northern parts of England and the south of Scotland. It is entirely a gratuitous supposition to imagine that either of these dialects commenced at a much later period than the other. Each was probably as old as the beginning of the Heptarchy. We know, that, among the various nations which composed it, the Saxons became predominant in the southern and western parts, and the Angles in the northern. As these nations were distinct in their original seats on the continent, so they arrived at different times, and brought with them different dialects. This variety of speech continued till the Norman conquest, and even afterwards. It is not affirmed that the dialects were absolutely invariable. Each would be more or less changed by time, and by intercourse with foreigners. The mutual connexion, also, which subsisted between the different nations of the Heptarchy would necessarily lead to some intermixture. But we may with safety assert, that the two great dialects of the Saxon language continued substantially distinct as long as the language itself was in use,—that the Dano Saxon in short never superseded the Anglo-Saxon. In a formal dissertation on this subject, citations might be made from the Saxon laws, from *Ethelbert* to *Canute*, from the *Saxon Chronicle*, from charters, and from works confessedly written after the Norman conquest, to show that whatever changes took place in the dialects of the southern and western parts of Britain, it never lost its distinctive character or became what can with any propriety be termed Dano-Saxon. After the Norman conquest both the dialects were gradually corrupted, till they terminated in modern English.

CARDALE.

causes; but like the constituents of the chemical compound, these elements were brought into contact, and their action was as violent as that of the acid and the alkali. Each strove for victory, yet none perfectly prevailed, nor on the other hand, was absolutely powerless; for each left its impress upon the new language; and the contributions which each made to it, are beautifully characteristic of the true value of each, and the sphere which each was calculated to fill; thus, our common, homely, fireside words are from the Saxon, while our language of chivalry, law, theology and science are from the Norman.

All those words representing physical action, and strength, and the common concerns of life, are from the Saxon. The Saxon was always acting, and always intent upon some object; he was assiduous in his ordinary duties, and a giant in arms.

Alfred laid the foundation of law, and refreshed the lamps of learning; and in a single age he elevated his native tongue and gave a name to Saxon literature.

All the particles, the elements employed in connecting and qualifying the terms of the language, are Saxon; while as we have said above, abstract terms, and those of law, chivalry, and the court, are usually Norman French.

The Saxon, subjected and oppressed, retired to the humbler walks of life, and there his language was exclusively spoken; the haughty Norman presided at the court, administered the laws, and his language was introduced into the palace. It presided at the altar, and was legalized at the bar. These facts are impressed

upon our language; there these opposing races have carved their history, and it cannot be effaced while the language endures. There they have reared a monument to their memory as immortal as the language itself:

“—— Monumentum aere perennius
Regalique situ pyramidium altius:”

“there they have executed a monument more lasting than brass, and more sublime than the regal elevation of pyramids.”

The Danish tongue, which was closely allied to the Saxon, so far mingled and coalesced with it, as to leave no distinct impress upon the language which resulted from the intermingling of the various elements we have mentioned; while the Normans, though they robbed the conquered of their lands, and imposed upon them their laws, could never force or persuade the Saxon to leave the use of his own tongue, and never succeeded in introducing the more polished dialect of the continent into the households of men. There the Saxon still lingered, and while the court, the tribunals of justice, and the schools used the bastard Latin and French brought from Normandy,—in the field and by the hearth was maturing that noble English tongue to which Chaucer gave form, and in which Shakspeare embalmed the noblest products of human genius.

ANGLO-SAXON LANGUAGE AND POETRY.



"A national literature" says Mr. Longfellow,* "is a subject which should always be approached with reverence. It is difficult to comprehend fully the mind of a nation; even when that nation still lives and we can visit it, and its present history, and the lives of men we know, help us to comment on the written text. But here the dead alone speak. Voices half understood; fragments of song, ending abruptly, as if the poet had sung no further, but died with these last words upon his lips; homilies preached to congregations that have been asleep for many centuries; lives of saints who went to their reward long before the world began to scoff at sainthood; and wonderful legends once believed by men, and now, in this age of wise children, hardly credible enough for a nurse's tale; nothing entire, nothing wholly understood, and no further comment or illustration than may be drawn from an isolated fact found in an old chronicle, or perchance a rude illustration in an old manuscript! Such is the literature we have now to consider. Such fragments and mutilated remains, has the human mind left of itself, coming down through the times of old, step by step, and every step a century. Old men and venerable accompany us through the Past; and pausing at the threshold of the Present, they put into our hands, at parting, such written records of themselves as they have. We should receive these things with reverence. We should respect old age."

This is the language of a poet as well as an historian, in approaching the literature of the Saxons; this is the awe and uncertainty that the historian feels, in attempting to record their departed glory; this is the inspiration

*Poets and Poetry of Europe.

that a poet feels in gathering up the fragments of their songs. But though the mantle of genius fall not on us, we have a more delicate task to perform; to analyze their language, to trace its history, and illustrate its connection with ours.

Various opinions have been entertained and urged, concerning the origin, and even the character of the Saxon language: one party pass it by in silent contempt, or if they notice it all, denounce it as a barbarous and barren dialect, observing no fixed rules of construction, and incapable of discharging its functions : while the other party maintain directly the reverse, and contend that in the golden days of Anglo-Saxon literature, the era of Alfred, the language was stable in its character, observed the strictest rules in its inflections, and possessed all the innate richness and plastic power of the illustrious Greek and Latin.

In addition to this eulogy upon its character, it is supposed, with some plausibility at least, to be of more ancient origin than either of these great classic tongues : thus coming down to us from the highest antiquity and affording the greatest latitude for fancy and speculation, it is to be expected that much diversity of opinion should arise ; and certainly no one ought to be reproached for displaying his learning and research upon this delicate and interesting subject, though he may contribute nothing to the fair solution of the question.

The extremes in this case, are so remote from one another, that it will be hazarding nothing to say, the truth lies between them : and it may suffice to make

a few suggestions with regard to each of these languages, and present a few specimens of Saxon literature, leaving the result to the unbiassed judgment of the reader.

Neither the Greek, or the Latin, is a simple, original language : the former is formed from the Hellenic, and Pelasgic dialects. The Pelasgians were the earliest inhabitants of Greece, and existed there eighteen generations before the Trojan war. They came from Asia, and spread themselves over Europe, even to the southern part of Italy. From the speech of those last named, a branch of the Pelasgic, the Latin was derived.

The Saxon being of Teutonic or Germanic extraction, is traced back in the Indo-European line, to Chorsin, the cradle of the human species : spreading thence to the south, they gave birth to the Persians, in whose language there are many Saxon words ; its origin is therefore lost or obscured in the high antiquity of its history : and if it be not older than the Persian, Greek and Latin, and if it contributed nothing to their formation, it contains elements in common with them, and belongs to the same great family. It is not a primitive language, simple, and unadulterated ; but is complex, being composed in part of different elements from other languages. (a)

It came upon British soil in the fifth century, when the Anglo-Saxons,—a wild and warlike race, or a combination of two races, the Saxons and Angles, (or Anglia, from whom the term English is derived,) invaded Britain, subjugated and expelled the Welsh

(a) See note B at the end of this vol.

or ancient Britains, and established their own institutions, laws, and language. Previous to this they were an unsettled race, addicted to war for plunder rather than glory. They were brave, and beautiful in person, with deep blue eyes, and long flowing hair: rejoicing in the storms of the ocean, and glorying in the emblazonry of the armor of their god.

In establishing themselves thus, in Britain, they planted our language and sowed the seeds of learning; and this is the great event that signalized them as a nation.

They did not change their habits or purposes, however, till about the last of the sixth century, when religion was planted among them by a pious monk from Rome.

This transformed them from a state of barbarism to civilization, and gave an impulse to learning: as the services of religion were performed in the Latin language, it became necessary to acquire a knowledge of that language: the treasures of Latin literature being thus opened to them, a desire for learning was induced, and a few minds applied themselves to its acquisition.

Under such influences the priest applied himself to the study of the classics: schools were opened in the cloistered cells of the monks, and honor and reputation were bestowed upon the votaries of dawning science. The Saxon clergy became familiar with the poetry and philosophy of Greece and Rome: in their literary pursuits they acquired the distinction of having attained a superiority over other parts of Europe

in learning, and they maintained it for more than a century.

The career of Saxon literature was brief, it embraced but about two centuries. The era of Saxon literature extends from Aldhelm,—who wrote Saxon, and Latin verse, and boasted that he was the first of his countrymen that enrolled themselves among the votaries of the Roman muse,—to Alfred the Great, with whose death Saxon literature declined, never to be revived again.

From the time of Augustus, to the dawn of letters among the Saxons, taste had been constantly declining: it now rose from the lowest point of depression, of barbarism, though a few ages were not sufficient to restore it to the purity and perfection from which it had fallen. Extensive reading and profound research could not restore it, for this age boasted of historians and philosophers,—philosophers who were versed in all the learning of Greece and Rome. Bede, upon whom posterity has bestowed the distinction of the venerable, wrote the ecclesiastical history of the Anglo-Saxons, and also elementary introductions to all of the sciences that were then known, together with sermons, biographies of eminent men, and commentaries upon most of the books of scripture. Alcuin also, wrote treatises upon the sciences: he compiled the lives of eminent men, and wrote comments upon the scriptures; but these comments and compilations did not develop the powers of taste, of thought, and reflection: they were not improvements in learning, nor did they serve to adorn and dignify human nature.

Their fragments of song are the most original and interesting of the relics of literature that they have left, and these for the want of a refined language are like ore in its unwrought state : they have the element of poetry without its artistic grace.

In the earliest stages of its existence, language is exceedingly simple, adapting itself to the wants of society which are few, in the infancy of civilization : the mind employed with the external world, and the common concerns of practical life, has not yet risen to the contemplation of the hidden laws of nature, or turned in upon itself to scrutinize the mysteries of its own organization and being ; complex ideas and abstract thoughts are yet uncreated, and no symbols are required to express them.

As the reflective powers are the latest of the powers of the human mind, in point of development, so abstract terms are among the latter improvements of language ; but poetry does not lose so much in this,—for she addresses herself to the imagination and the heart,—rests on taste and artistic grace. In that stage of advancement when combination, comparison, and judgment commence, the nice distinctions of things are marked, and the finest shades of meaning are recognised ; when the finer sensibilities are awakened, a taste for truth and beauty are developed, and its creations produced. The wild scenery of earth and the majesty of the firmament, the torrent, the ocean and the storm make the first and deepest impressions, and they are, accordingly early incorporated into all languages.

Anglo-Saxon poetry agrees with this early state of civilization. It exhibits the characteristic features of an uneducated, active, and independent mind ; a mind always intent upon its object, but seldom or never reflective : it displays the powers and energies of a vigorous mind, mingling in the conflict of arms, and glancing from earth to heaven.

The rudeness of these specimens, possessing the spirit, with but little of the form or finish of poetry, does not lessen the interest that they are calculated to excite. They form an important link in the history of English language and learning ; and although the chain has been shattered, it was not entirely severed. The torch of learning was lighted—only in the cells of the monks, but as these cells were scattered over the land their occupants were enabled to shed a lustre upon that benighted age, to propagate the love of learning from the “Gallic Alps to the banks of the Loire, the Rhine, and the Elbe ;” and although successive invaders appeared, the spirit thus awakened could not be extinguished, and the genius of the Saxon mind and language were perpetuated, and they still live in our civil institutions and our discourse.

Saxon poetry is characterized chiefly by its short phrases and parallel lines ; omission of particles ; abrupt and strong metaphor and inversion. Full of energy and vivacity, it presents nature in her ruder attire ; it is the production of an uncultivated mind, and an unrefined taste. It is nevertheless Poetry, that wild and glorious nymph whose beauty has been seen and admired in all ages, who has been

wooed by the humble, courted and caressed by the great; whose gentle spirit diffuses itself through all the grades of human life, and finds a welcome reception in every heart. It does not possess the glowing sentiment, the beautiful imagery, the graphic description, condensed expression and musical periods which we are accustomed to think of as essential to genuine poetry; yet it exhibits occasional gleams of vigorous thought, elevated sentiment and grandeur of conception which exalt it far above the region of prose and render its language very different from the common diction of life.

CÆDMON'S PARAPHRASE.

Cædmon may be considered as the father of Anglo-Saxon poetry as his name stands first in its annals, and his great poem is valuable for the light that it throws upon the history of the language, as well as for its poetical merits. It vindicates the character of the Saxon language against the charges that it is jejune, and important only to the antiquary. It also illustrates clearly the Saxon origin of the English language, and with other specimens goes to prove that neither the greatest amount nor the most important part of it was from the French, Latin, nor Greek, but from the Saxon.

It will be seen too, that all of the most beautiful productions, the lasting monuments of English literature, are largely imbued with the Saxon element. Of the words in the best English works, and those especially that have any pretension to taste and beauty, from five to nine tenths are pure Saxon, changed only

in form, as the marble is changed when it is carved into a symmetrical form and imbued with power to speak to the imagination. The old words have been condensed, their roughest consonants have been dropped, and their inflections modified ; thus fitting them to express simplicity combined with harmony ; “so that the sounds of our English words are commonly like those of stringed instruments, short and transient, which rise at a single touch, while those of other languages are like those of wind instruments, sweet and swelling, and lengthen out into varieties of modulation ;” and all that is gained by the exchange, is the melody of these sonorous words ; and on the other hand there is the sacrifice of simplicity, with the nerve and vivacity of our own. Chaucer, Spencer, Shakespeare, Milton, Cowper, Scott and Byron continue the Saxon chain without a broken link ; and it is handed down to us entire ; covered with gems and jewels, the wealth of the intellectual world.

Milton’s poetry, combines more beauties, and displays more graces, in common with other languages, than the productions of any other English genius, and at the same time makes pre-eminent the power of the Saxon mind. Cædmon’s poem exhibits so much of the Miltonic spirit as to give much plausibility to the opinion that Milton was not entirely ignorant of this poem and that he drew from it the design of his paradise. In its first topic, the “Fall of the Angels,” says Mr. Turner, “it exhibits much of the Miltonic spirit ; and if it were clear that our illustrious bard, had been familiar with the Saxon, we should be

induced to think that he owed something to the paraphrase of Cædmon. No one at least can read Cædmon without feeling the idea intruding on his mind." The solicitude, to found *Paradise Lost* upon this poem has been so great, that to remove the difficulty of Milton's supposed ignorance of the Saxon, it is supposed that it was read to him by a friend; and that thus treasuring it up in his memory, he conceived his plan, and gave birth to that matchless production which almost infinitely surpasses its supposed archetype.

THE FIRST DAY.

There had not here as yet,
 Save cavern—shade
 Aught been;
But this wide abyss
Stood deep and dim,
Strange to its Lord,
Idle and useless;
 On which looked with his eyes
 The king firm of mind,
 And beheld those places
 Void of joys;
Saw the dark cloud
Lower in eternal night,
Swart under heaven,
Dark and waste,
 Until this worldly creation
 Through the word existed
 Of the Glory-King.
Here first shaped
 The Lord eternal,
 Chief of all creatures,
Heaven and earth;
The firmament upheaved,
And this spacious land
Established,

By his strong powers,
 The Lord Almighty.
The earth as yet was
Not green with grass;
 Ocean covered,
 Swart in eternal night
 Far and wide,
The dusky ways.
 Then was the glory-bright
 Spirit of heaven's guardian
 Borne over the deep
 With utmost speed:
 The Creator of angels bade,
 The Lord of life,
Light to come forth
Over the spacious deep.
 Quickly was fulfilled
 The high king's behest;
 For him was holy light
 Over the waste,
 As the Maker bade.
 Then sundered
 The Lord of triumphs
 Over the ocean-flood
 Light from darkness,

Shade from brightness,
Then gave names to both
The Lord of life.
Light was first
Through the Lord's word
Named day ;
Beauteous bright creation !
Well pleased

The Lord at the beginning
The procreative time.
The first day saw
The dark shade
Swart prevailing
Over the wide abyss.

—The wide abyss
Stood deep and dim
Strange to its Lord.

This, in the most simple expression, presents a sublime conception of the unformed universe.

The Creator of angels bade
Light to come forth
Over the spacious deep.

Cædmon, in the creation of light contemplates only the power of the Creator ; while Milton speaks also of the nature and office of light.

Let there be light, said God ; and forthwith Light
Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,
Sprung from the deep ; and from her native east
To journey through the æry gloom began,
Sphered in a radiant cloud, for yet the sun
Was not ; *she in a cloudy tabernacle*
Sejourned the while.

SOLILOQUY OF THE REBEL ANGEL.

"Why should I toll ?" said he ;
"To me it is no whit needful
To have a superior ;
I can with my hands as many
Wonders work ;
I have great power
To form

A Divine throne,
Higher in the heavens.
Why should I sue for his grace
Or bend to him in obedience ?
I may be a god as he.
Stand by me strong associates,
Who will not deceive me.

Heroes stern of mood,	I may as their leader
They have chosen me for chief,	Sway in his realm :
Renowned warriors !	I think it not right
With such may one take counsel,	Nor need I
With such capture his adversaries ;	Flatter any one
My earnest friends they are,	As if to any gods
Faithful in their thoughts ;	A god inferior."

The portraiture of Satan's hostility is the most original and interesting part of the poem ; and displays the genius of the poet to the best advantage. Cædmon has made Satan as lofty and invincible as Milton made him, and there is a striking coincidence in the spirit and the thought with which they have clothed this character. They both hurl him from heaven with nearly the same ceremony.

When the All-powerful it
 All had hard,
 That his angel devised
 Great presumption
 To raise up against his Master,
 And spake proud words
 Foolishly against the Lord
 Then must he expatiate the deed,
 Share the work of war,
 And for his punishment must have
 Of all deadly ills the greatest.
 So doth every man
 Who against his Lord
 Deviseth to war,
 With crime against the great Ruler.
 Then was the Mighty angry.
 The highest Ruler of heaven,
Hurled him from the lofty seat ;
 Hate had he gained at his Lord,
 His favor he had lost,
 Incensed with him was God in mind,
 Therefore must he seek the gulf
Of hard hell torment,
For that he had warred with heaven's Ruler.

Milton hurls him from the ethereal sky, down to bottomless perdition.

Aspiring

To set himself above his peers,
He trusted to have equal'd the Most High,
If he opposed, and with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarch of God,
Raised impious war in heaven, and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition ; there to dwell
In adamant chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms,

Cædmon represents the expelled angels, as falling for the space of three days and three nights, and Milton represents them as falling nine days.

The fiend with all his comrades
Fell then from heaven above,
Through as long as three nights and
days,
The angels from heaven into hell ;
And them all the Lord changed to
devils,
Because they his deed and word
Would not revere ;
Therefore them in a worse light,
Under the earth beneath,
Almighty God
Had placed triumphless
In the swart hell ;
There they have at even,

Immeasurably long,
Each of all the fiends,
A renewal of fire ;
Then cometh ere dawn
The eastern wind,
Frost bitter cold,
Ever fire or dart ;
Some hard torment
They must have,
It was their punishment
Their world was changed :
For their sinful course
He filled hell
With the apostates.

Milton says :

Nine days they fell ; confounded chaos roar'd
And felt ten-fold confusion in their fall,
Through his wild anarchy, so huge a rout
Encumbered him with ruin ; Hell at last

Yawning received them whole, and on them closed ;
 Hell, their fit habitation, fraught with fire
 Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain.
 Disburthen'd heaven rejoiced, and soon repair'd
 Her mural breach, *returning whence it rolled.*

Cædmon conceives the design of seeking out the
 abode of Adam and Eve :

That he with wings
 Might fly,
 Revolve in cloud,
 To where stand wrought
 Adam and Eve;
 On earth's kingdom,
With weal encircled
 And we are hither cast
 Into this deep den.

With wings, *to revolve in cloud*, is like Milton's *aery*
flight through the palpable obscure :

But first whom shall we send
 In search of this new world ? Whom shall we find
 Sufficient ? who shall tempt with wandering feet
 The dark unfathomed infinite abyss,
 And through the palpable obscure find out
 His uncouth way, or spread his aery flight
 Upborne with indefatigable wings
 Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive
 The happy isle ?

TEMPTATION OF EVE.

He led her thus with lies,
 And with wiles instigated
 The woman to that evil
 Until began within her
 The serpent's counsel boil ;
 (To her a weaker mind had

The Creator assigned)
 So that she her mood
 Began relax, after those allurements ;
 Therefore she of the enemy received,
 Against the Lord's word
 Of death's tree

The noxious fruit.

Then to her spouse she spake

" Adam, my lord,

This fruit is so sweet,

Mild in the breast,

And this bright messenger

God's angel good ;

I by his habit see

That he is the envoy

Of our Lord

Heaven's King.

His favor it is for us

Better to gain

Than his aversion,

If thou to him this day

Spake aught of harm,

Yet will he it forgive

If we to him obedience

Will show.

What shall profit thee such hateful strife

With thy Lord's messenger ?

To us is his favor needful ;

He may bear our errands

To the all-powerful

Heavenly King.

I can see from hence

Where he himself sitteth

That is southeast

With bliss encircled,

Him who formed this world.

I see his angels

Encompass him

With feathery wings,

Of all folks greatest,

Of hands most joyous.

Who could to me

Such perception give

If now it

God did not send

Heaven's Ruler ?

I can hear from far

And so widely see

Through the whole world

Over the broad creation ;

I can the joy of the firmament

Hear in heaven ;

It became light to me in mind

From without and within

After the fruit I tasted ;

I now have of it

Here in my hand,

My good lord,

I will fain give it thee ;

I believe that it

Came from God

Brought by his command,

From what this messenger told me

With cautious words.

It is not like to aught

Else on earth ;

But, so this messenger sayeth,

That it directly

Came from God."

She spake to him oft,

And all day urged him

To that dark deed,

That they their Lord's

Will break.

The fell envoy stood by

Exciting his desires,

And with wiles urged him,

Dangerously followed him :

The foe was full near

Who on that dire journey

Had fared

Over a long way ;

Nations he studied

Into that great perdition

Men to cast,

To corrupt and to mislead

That they God's loan

The Almighty's gift,

Might forfeit,

The power of heaven's kingdom :

For the hell-miscreant
 Well knew
 That they God's ire
 Must have
 And hell-torment,
 The torturing punishment
 Needs receive,
 Since they God's command
 Had broken,
 What time he seduced
 With lying words
 To that evil counsel
The beauteous woman
 Of females fairest,
 That she after his will spake,
 Was as a help to him
 To seduce God's handiwork.
 Then she to Adam spake,
Fairest of women,
 Full oft,
 Till in the man began
His mind to turn ;

So that he trusted to the promise
 Which to him the woman
 Said in words ;
 Yet did she it through faithful mind,
 Knew not that hence so many ills,
 Sinful woes,
 Must follow
 To mankind,
 Because she took in mind
 That she the hostile envoy's
 Suggestions would obey ;
 But weened that she the favor
 Of heaven's King
 Wrought with the words
 Which she to the man
 Revealed, as it were a token,
 And vowed them true,
 Till that to Adam
 Within his breast
 His mind was changed
And his heart began
Turn to her will.

Milton's Eve does not tell the story in a purer strain of poetry than this ; she has more mannerism about the matter : Milton's Adam is not approached with such a delicate strain of persuasion : nor does he receive as graciously and as freely pardon his erring consort as Cædmon's does :

Hast thou not wondered Adam at my stay ?
 Thee I have missed, and thought it long, deprived
 Thy presence ; agony of love till now
 Not felt, nor shall be twice ; for never more
 Mean I to try, what rash untried I sought,
 The pain of absence from thy sight. But strange
 Hath been the cause, and wonderful to hear :
 This tree is not as we are told, a tree
 Of danger tasted, or to evil unknown
 Opening the way, but of divine effect

*To open eyes, and make them god's who taste ;
 And hath been tasted such ; the serpent wise,
 Or not restrained as we, or not obeying,
 Hath eaten of the fruit ; and is become,
 Not dead as we are threatened, but thenceforth
 Endued with human voice and human sense,
 Reasoning to admiration ; and with me
 Persuasively hath so prevailed that I
 Have also tasted, and have also found
 The effects to correspond.*

THE SAILING OF BEOWULF.

The poems of Beowulf are among the oldest of the remains of Saxon literature. The poem of Beowulf is the oldest epic in any modern language, and contains some six thousand lines.

"It comes to us," says Mr. Longfellow, "from a very distant and hoar antiquity ; somewhere between the seventh and tenth centuries. It is like a piece of ancient armor ; rusty and battered, and yet strong. From within comes a voice sepulchral, as if the ancient armor spoke, telling a simple, straight forward narrative : with here and there a boastful speech of a rough old Dane, reminding one of those made by the heroes of Homer."

Judging from the language of this poem it must have been written as late as the ninth century : its style, places it in the most advanced state of Saxon civilization and learning. It is simple, and vigorous, in its style, and free in a great measure from the accumulation of epithets, the abrupt metaphor, and the gorgeous imagery which are the common characteristics of the earlier productions of the Saxon mind.

Famous was Beowulf;
 Wide sprang the blood
 Which the heir of Shylds
 Shed on the lands.
 So shall the bracelets
 Purchase endeavor,
 Freely presented,
 As by thy fathers;
 And all the young men
 As is their custom,
 Cling round their leader
 Soon as the war comes.
 Lastly thy people
 The deeds shall bepraise
 Which their men have performed.
 When the Shyld had awaited
 The time he should stay,
 Came many to fare
 On the billows so free.
 His ship they bore out
 To the brim of the ocean
 And his comrades sat down
 At their oars as he bade:

A word could control
 His good fellows, the Shylds,
 There, at the Hythe,
 Stood his old father
 Long to look after him.
 The band of his comrades,
 Eager for outfit,
 Forward the Atheling.
 Then all the people
 Cheered their loved lord,
 The giver of bracelets,
 On the deck of the ship
 He stood by the mast.
 There was treasure
 Won from afar
 Laden on board.
 Ne'er did I hear
 Of a vessel appointed
 Better for battle,
 With weapons of war,
 And waistcoats of wool.
 And axes and swords.

GOOD NIGHT.

The night-helm grew dusky,
 Dark over the vassals;
 The court all rose,
 The mingled-haired
 Old Scylding
 Would visit his bed;
 The Geat wished the
 Renowned warrior to rest
 Immeasurably well.
 Soon him the foreigner,
 Weary of his journey,
 The hall-thane guided forth
 Who, after a fitting manner,

Provided all that
 The thane needed,
 Whatsoever that day
 The sailors over the deep
 Should have.
 The magnanimous warrior rested:
 The house rose aloft
 Curved and variegated with gold
 The stranger slept therein,
 Until the pale raven
 Blithe of heart,
Announced the joy of heaven
The bright sun to be come.

AN OLD MAN'S SORROW.

Careful, sorrowing	Joy in the dwellings,
He seeth in his son's bower	As there was before ;
The wine-hall deserted,	Then departeth he into songs
The resort of the wind noiseless ;	Singeth a lay of sorrow,
The knight sleepeth,	One after one ;
The warrior in darkness ;	All seemed to him too wide,
There is not there	The plains and the dwelling-place.
Noise of the harp,	

THE EXILE'S SONG.

War and the exploits of heroes are the common themes of the Saxon poet ; these are the elements of the poem of Beowulf, the Sea-Goth ; Cædmon rises to the contemplation of heavenly things ; and Alfred sung of nature, of science, and the discursiveness of the mind, but no one caught the inspiration of beauty or loveliness and portrayed the delicate features of nature or celebrated the passion of love. Woman imparted nothing of purity or tenderness to their literature and Christianity did not develop the finer sensibilities.

This is one of the most pathetic pieces in the Saxon language ; it is written in a truly plaintive and somewhat touching strain. The absence of his lord makes the world a joyless abode to the exile ; he sits in his earthly cave, the long summer day and weeps ; the grave is guarding his friends and his mind can never rest.

I this lay compose (a)	Of my own journeying,
Of myself, full sad ;	That I may say
<hr/>	
(a) Ic this gied wrece	Hwaet ic yrmtha gebad
By me, ful geomorre ;	Siththan ic up aweox
Minre sylfre sith	Niwes othe caldca.
Ic thaet secgan maeg	

What miseries I have endured
 Since I grew up
 Lately or of old.
 I serve no man now
 I have always struggled with suffering
 Chiefly of my exile path.
 My lord departed
 Hence from his people
 Over the lake of the waves:
 I had daily anxiety
 In what lands
 My chieftain was
 When I departed to go
 To seek his service:
 A friendless exile's journey.

The hardships of my woes began
 That this man's
 Relations contrived
 Thro' perverted thought
 To separate us two;
 That we two, most widely (y)
 In the world's kingdom
 Should live most like enemies
 And I was weary
 That my lord ordered me
 To be here taken hardly way.
 "I have little that I love (b)
 In this country
 Of faithful friends.

For this my mind is sad
 When I fully equal to me
 Have found no man
 In hard fortune
 Sad in mind,
 Depressed in spirit
Musing on destruction.
 In blithe habits
 Full oft we two agreed
 That nought else should divide us
 Except death alone;
 At length this is changed
 And as if it never had been
 Is now our friendship.
The bond is far broken (c)
Of my greatly beloved.

To endure enmities (d)
 Man orders me to dwell
 In the bowers of the forest,
 Under the oak tree
In this earthy cave.

Cold is this earth-dwelling:
 I am quite wearied out.
 Dim are the dells
 High up are mountains
 Abetter city of twigs
 With briars overgrown,
A joyless abode
 Full oft wrath here me
 Has pursued from my lord's path,

(y) Thaet wit, gewidost
 In woruld rice

(b) Ahte ic leofru Iyt
 On theas un londstede
 Holdra freonda
 Forþon is min hoga geomor,
 Tha ic meful gemaec

(c) Seol is feor geneal

(d) Faehth a dreogan
 Heght mee man wunden
 On wudre bearwa,

Sifdon lath licost.

He monnan funde
 Heard soligne,
 Hyge geomorne,
 Mod unthendue,
 Morther hycgende.

Mines fela leofan.

Under ac treo
 In tham eorth scraefe.

My friends are in the earth, (e)
 These loved in life
The grave is guarding
 While I above
Alone am going.
 Under the oak tree
 Beyond this earth-cave
 There I must sit
 The long summer day.

There I may weep
My paths of exile
 Of my many troubles.
 For this I never can
 From the care
 Of my mind, rest
 Of all the weariness
 That has pursued me in this life.

ALFRED'S METRE.

METRE, III.

Alas! in how grim
 And how bottomless
 A gulf, labors
 The darkling mind,
 When it the strong
 Storms lash
 Of worldly cares;
 When it, thus contending,
 Its proper light
 Once forsakes,
 And in woe forgets
 The everlasting joy,
 And rushes into the darkness
 Of this world,
 Afflicted with cares!
 Thus has it now befallen
 This my mind;
 Now it no more knows
 Of good for God,
 But lamentations
 For the eternal world:
 To it is need of comfort.

METRE, VI.

Then wisdom again
 His treasury of words unlocked,
 Sung various maxims,
 And thus expressed himself.
 When the sun
 Clearest shines,
 Serenest in the heaven,
 Quickly are obscured
 Over the earth
 All other stars:
 Because their brightness is not
 Brightness at all,
 Compared with
 The sun's light.
 When mild blows
 The south and western wind
 Under the clouds,
 Then quickly grow
 The flowers of the field,
 Joyful that they may.
 But the stark storm,
 When it strong comes
 From north and east
 It quickly takes away

(e) Frynd synd en earthan
 Leof lif gende
 Leger weardiath
 Thon ic on whtare
 Ana gange.
 Under ac treo

Geond thas earth scrafæ.
 Thaer ic sittan mot
 Summer langne daeg.
 Thaer ic wepan maeg
 Mine wraec sithas
 Earfotha fela.

The beauty of the rose.
And also the northern storm
Constrained by necessity,
That it is strongly agitated,
Lashes the spacious sea

Against the shore.
Alas! that on earth
Aught of permanent
Work in the world
Does not ever remain!

EXCURSIVENESS OF THE MIND.

I have wings
Swifter than the birds :
With them I can fly
Far from the earth,
Over the high roof
Of this heaven.
And there I now must
Wing thy mind,
With my feathers,
To look forth
Till that thou mayest
This world
And every earthly thing
Entirely overlook :
Thou mayest over the skies
Extensively
Sport with thy wings,
Far up over
The heavens to wind
Afterwards to view
Above over all.
Thou mayest also go
Above the fire
That many years ascends far
Betwixt the air and firmament
So as to it at the beginning
The father appointed.
That thou mayest afterwards
With the sun
Go betwixt
The other stars.

Thou mightest full soon
In the firmament
Above afterwards advance ;
And then continuously
To the coldest
Only star
That outmost is
Of all the stars.
This Saturnus
The inhabitants of the sea call
Under the heavens.
He is the cold
All icy planet.
He wanders outmost
Over all
Above the other stars.
Afterwards thou then
From this may upheave thyself
To go forth ;
Thou mayest proceed farther :
Then wouldest thou afterwards
Soon
Ascend above the firmament,
In its swift course.
If thou goest on right
Thou wouldest then the highest
Heaven leave behind.
Then mightest thou afterwards
Of the true light
Have thy portion.
Whencethe only King
Widely governs

Above the firmament.
 And below ;
 And in like manner rules
 All the creatures
 Of the world.
 This is the Wise King
 This he that governs
 Over the nations of men,
 And all the other
 Kings of the earth.
 He with his bridle
 Hath restrained around
 All the revolutions
 Of earth and heaven.
 He his governing reigns
 Well coerces.
 He governs ever
 Through his strong might
 All the swift cars
 Of heaven and earth.
 He the only judge is steadfast,
 Unchangeable,
 Beauteous and great.
 If thou turnest right in thy way
 Up to that country,
 Thou wilt find it
 A noble place ;
 Though thou now yet
 Hast not obtained it.
 If thou ever again
 There canst come
 Then wilt thou say

And soon declare :—
 “ This is entirely
 My own kindred
 Earth and country.
 Formerly from hence
 I came and was born
 Through the might of his artificer.
 I will never
 Depart hence from it
 But I always here
 Will softly
 With my wings desire
 Firmly to stand.”
 If to thee then
 It should ever again happen
 That thou wilt or must
 The world's darkness
 Again try ;
 Thou mightest easily look on
 The unrighteous kings of the earth
 And the other arrogant rich,
 That this weak folk
 Worst torment.
 And see that always
 They be very wretched ;
 Unmighty
 In every thing ;
 Even the same
 That they, wretched folk
 Some while now
 Most sorely dreaded.

FORMATION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.



The feeble advances which Saxon learning had made, was checked by the invasion of the Danes, and the mind was replunged again into the barbarity and ignorance from which, for two centuries, it had been slowly, at intervals, emerging. The brightest lights were already extinguished; the knowledge, for the most part, of the Saxons was buried in the graves of Aldhelm, Bede and Alcuin: and Alfred refreshed the lamps of learning only to shed a temporary gleam of light upon that benighted age and which was succeeded by still deeper darkness. The Norman conquest annihilated every thing but the Saxon mind and it remains now to consider the changes which took place in the language.

That an entire change was wrought in the Saxon language, and that the result of this change is the English of the present day, though enriched from other sources, and vastly improved, while at the same time the Saxon element actually predominates, no one doubts, who has traced it through its transition and

carefully studied its nature. But the causes of this transformation are not so evident.

In order to maintain that the same effects would have ensued if William and his followers had remained in their native soil, it is necessary to assign other causes, and to show by what particular inherent law of the language, or what general law in the organization of those who spoke it, this transformation has been, and under any circumstances, would have been effected.

Language is not independent of external circumstances or foreign influences; and though it may be true that in our own times political commotions have not affected languages; that they have not confused them, or disarranged their idioms, it by no means follows that in a different state of society, like that of our early ancestors, when only a small part of the living language was committed to writing, such effects and derangements would not follow such commotions: and although they may in no case affect the intellectual powers of man to the same degree that they influence civil society; yet no civil revolution has been recorded in history which did not leave its indelible impress upon the language of the people whose state was changed. And if we find that the language has not entirely given way and crumbled beneath the shock, it was not from the want of influences brought to bear upon it: it survived because of its own innate strength and plastic power; for like the sensible yet indestructible flower, though language

may be trodden down and mutilated, it can never be destroyed.

This property of language, on the other hand, renders it one of the strongest bonds that can hold together, and harmonize the discordant elements of society : it is the foundation and cement of government. Before a complete revolution can be effected in church or state, so as to entirely separate the present from the past, the language must be annihilated or so changed as to efface all those associations that have endeared to us, and attached us to the past : nay, the very connection in our thoughts must be severed before such a revolution is possible. Perhaps it is owing to the controlling influence of language over our mental operations, more than to any other cause, that the intellectual nature of man is not more deranged by violent political commotions and great civil revolutions : such revolutions though violent are, as we have said, never complete, and never affect men completely, because language keeps up a connection that nothing can break.

We may conclude therefore, that though language is never wholly altered by civil changes, and in our day is but little affected by them, it is not improbable that at an earlier period it was essentially modified by such changes.

The time extending from the eleventh to the fourteenth century may be termed the period of formation : during which the speech of England passed through various changes until it assumed nearly its present form, and is properly termed the English language.

This long period is covered with darkness, mellowed with but a few faint gleams of light, and yet it is not destitute of events pregnant with consequences to literature and learning.

The attention bestowed upon letters, in the auspicious era of Alfred entirely ceased at his death, and the mind continued to relapse in ignorance till the tenth century, when it seemed to have sunk to the lowest point of depression, and gave to the age the denomination, of the most benighted of the obscure ages. A universal torpor rested upon the human mind. There was no one to reprove the degeneracy of these times, and to awaken emulation, like the great Saxon king who told his countrymen ; “ *There was a time when foreigners sought wisdom and learning in this island ; but now we are compelled to seek them in foreign lands.*” Or like Alcuin, at once a poet, an orator, a linguist, an historian, a philosopher and theologian, who said to his contemporaries : “ *Think on the worth of our predecessors, and blush at your own inferiority!* View the treasures of your library, and the magnificence of your monastery, and recall to mind the rigid virtues of those by whom they were formerly possessed. Among you was educated Bede, the most illustrious doctor of modern times. How intense was his application ! How great in return is his reputation among men : How much greater still is his reward with God ! Let his example rouse you from your torpor : listen to the instructions of your teachers, open your books, and learn to understand

their meaning." Hence the necessity of some sudden revolution to arouse the dormant energies of men.

The improvements, in art and letters, which the Normans brought with them, gave no immediate impulse to the Saxon mind; they rather diverted learning to another channel: the French becoming the popular language, caused the Saxon to be neglected and it was finally brought into contempt.

This neglect together with the events that followed confused the language itself, and reduced it to a chaotic state: at this point, commence the process, the changes, which terminate in the English of the fourteenth century. The Saxon becomes in a manner a dead language; and the English is its resurrection in a purified form.

Language, like every art, and science, when analyzed and reduced to its fundamental elements, is exceedingly simple; * a few fundamental principles

* The noun and the verb are not only the principal parts of speech, but all others are derived from these. The Saxon verb is derived from the noun. The *power* of the verb is often given to the noun by implication or construction, and not expressed by any change of form. This is the case too with some verbs in the English. The words love, hope, fear, &c. These words whether used as nouns or verbs are the same. When they have different forms; the verb is formed by adding a final syllable to the noun, and the *power* of the verb is generally expressed by that syllable: as bat, a club, beat-*an* to beat.

“ bidde, a prayer, bidd-*an* to pray.

“ blostm, a flower, blostm-*ian*, to blossom.

cos. a kiss, cyes-*an*, to kiss.

Thus the verbs are generally composed of a noun, and the syllables, *an*, *ian*, or *gan*: but *gan* is generally abbreviated to *an*. These final syllables seem to imbue the noun with life and action. The idea of a verb without its primary noun is perhaps impossible. It is true the noun cannot always be found, but it may still exist in another language, it may have been dropped entirely after the verb was formed.

Verbs are formed from other verbs, as *for-letan*, to dismiss, being composed of *faran*, to go, and *letan*, to let, as is simply let go. Nouns are formed from two other nouns, as *ac*, an oak, and corn.

Primitive nouns express only sensible objects: but by combination and association they express abstract ideas.

embrace all that is essential to it, and regulate all its functions. And the formation of language represents the progress of mind from infancy to maturity, from the ruder to the more refined state. It has been, somewhere, remarked by an ingenious philosopher,—all men are ingenious who can make the exception to a principle appear to be its essential element,—that the object of language is to conceal our feelings; and to a certain extent, the remark is just. In the absence of language, the thoughts are chiefly expressed by the feelings, the emotions, the passions, connected with them, as depicted in the countenance. The first aim of language was to supply the place of feeling and natural expression in the communication of thought. As the mind enlarged, acquired new ideas, and became more active and speedy in its operations, the symbols by which its ideas and operations were expressed, increased and accommodated themselves to dispatch. Hence are those abbreviations and inflections, by which thoughts are embodied in such condensed and symmetrical forms. Particles*, which occupy the least possible space, in language and are like glue and

Some verbs are formed from nouns, as *witan*, to know, from *wit* a wise.

Mode and tense do not originally belong to the verb: and the Saxon verb is actually made up of different verbs. Its various inflections are only combinations of these.

I was, waes,
You were, waere, } plural, *waeron.*
He was, waes.

I am, eom, or am, om, beo, or ar,
Thou art, eart, or arth, bist, es or sy, } plural, *synd, syndon, synt, synt, bieth*
He is, ys or bieth, or sy. } *or biithon.*

com, es, sy are like the Greek *αἰμί, εἰς, ἔσθι.*

ar, arth, ain, and sy, sy, synd belong to different classes or stocks, and resemble the Latin *sum* and *eram*.

waes, waere, waes, waeron, belong to another branch of the Saxon.

* See chart.

coloring to the finished work,—serving to unite, and qualify,—were originally verbs used in all the tenses and moods: but in time dropped all save the single appropriated form, yet, that in its various relations, preserves the aggregate meaning of all the variations of the original verb. On the other hand, the variations of the verb, numbers, tenses, and the like, multiply: words used metaphorically, finally drop their original literal meaning, and becoming established in the metaphorical sense convey a volume of meaning. When the mind attains refinement and maturity, it is controlled by its associations, or by trains of thought, rather than by impulse, and is inclined to observe the natural, instead of the inverted order, in the expression of thought; and as there is somewhere in nature, an illustration for every idea, and a symbol for every emotion, the mode of expression becomes perfect and beautiful; and language in its written form, is then *adorned* with metaphors and figures, while the thought is not weighed down by them, as in a rude and more poetical state of society.

Thus it is that language grows up amid the active, exciting scenes, and practical duties of life, and at length shapes the literature of a nation, while that in its turn controls the national mind. The busy world creates the phrases, while the poet and philosopher improve and refine them. They can prune and polish, but they cannot create or multiply them; this is done in the formation stages of the tongue, and here the language itself is its best and truest histo-

rian. The integrity of its records cannot be controverted.

The Norman conquest exerted a two-fold influence upon the vernacular Saxon tongue. The rudiments of cultivation, and the ideas of refinement and splendor that were then introduced from France tended, in the course of time, to improve and exalt the native mind. But on the other hand, in addition to the results produced by the edict of exclusion pronounced upon the language, by the conqueror, the Norman culture tended to entice the Saxon mind into a new channel. Still, if it be true that the native tongue was voluntarily neglected by the educated Saxon, it is difficult to conceive how a resurrection was effected, and why its genius, its spirit, as well as its form did not forever cease to live. The reason, however, is obvious. Although in every department of society, where encouragement was, in any way, given to learning,—in the schools, in the courts of justice, in the church, and the palace,—the Norman French prevailed; and although the Saxon barons, the few that were admitted to stations of *rank*, readily adopted it, yet among the commons, the mass, the Saxon speech never was abandoned; nor under the existing state of things, never could be altogether exchanged for the French. Natural enmity, and national prejudices prevented that intimate and frequent intercommunication which is necessary in order to learn a spoken language; the Saxons had neither time nor inclination to learn a language from books; and they resisted, not only the encroachments upon their liberties, but stood out to

the last against the unjust exclusion and contempt of their language. Robert of Gloucester, in the indistinct tones of the infant English, gave utterance to the wrongs which the Saxon endured, from the attempt that was made to banish his native tongue. He says the people love their native tongue, and yet they are made subjects of ridicule if they cannot speak the French :

“ For if a man con no Frenche, men tell of hem right lite
But lowe men holden Engliche here kind speche zite,
I wene in the world, ne is londe neither countrey none
That ne holdeth his kinde speche but Englande alone.”

They did not fail to make known their condition, nor to utter their complaints; they resisted long and manfully, and at length, Edward the III. was prevailed upon to abolish this badge of servitude, and to restore the native tongue.

The internal changes which the language was undergoing, were as gradually wrought, and the results were equally auspicious.

The common people, therefore, adhered to their native tongue, and preserved it pure, unadulterated, until the reign of Henry I. up to which time the mechanism of the Saxon remains the same; the inverted order and confused arrangement of their words continued: nouns and even particles and verbs, in the imperfect tense, were inflected, and it still preserved all of its grammatical intricacies. But in the written laws (a) of the reign of Stephen, the first stages of this transition are clearly displayed; and it is curious to

(a) And sworn the *pais* to halden. Did God *justice*. Didden him there in *prisons*. And pineden him alle the ilce *pining*. And beget thare privileges.

observe how steadily the Saxon mind struggles to relieve itself from the restraints of a foreign language and law, and to continue in its original state of perfect freedom.

The first step in the transition, was the adoption, from time to time, of foreign terms, from the Welsh, the Danes, and the Normans. It is a fact worthy of notice, that although many of the Saxons were familiar with, and wrote the Latin, at this time no Latin words are found in the written vernacular language,—a fact showing that the Latin in its very nature is an exotic, and will not grow upon the same soil with the Saxon, and that it survives only by being engrafted into the trunk. Though agreeing originally in two important particulars,—the inflections of their words to regulate their agreement and government: and the inverted order of their style,—yet they did not naturally unite and grow up together; and the Saxon in its progress departed from both of these particulars, assuming a natural arrangement, and a simpler form.

Some Latinisms were, doubtless, common in the spoken language of those times, which were introduced through Norman French and from the Britains; the latter having received them from the mouth of the Romans, when Cæsar invaded Britain; as is proved by the fact that the British poems actually exhibit such adulterations. In the poems of Taliesin (*b*) there are many Latin words. It was through speech also, that the Danes transmitted their contribu-

(*b*) A Duw Reen rez menelfon. *Deus dudeliwad.*
 Lleaws creadur a fug terra.

tions to our language, for their language (*b*) was not cultivated or embodied in literature till a much later date.

The effects which, this mingling of different peoples, and this mixing of different dialects, with the Saxon, were naturally, calculated to produce, are immediately seen in the breaking up of the original arrangement (*a*) of the Saxon tongue and its adoption of prepositions in the place of declensions; thus rendering it more simple and vigorous, and at the same time more plastic and precise.

Were it necessary to adduce evidence in support of the position that the language controls the mind and shapes the literature of a nation, it might be easily shown that this simplification in the language produced the same result in the literature of England. This is the point where the Gothic separates from the classic style, and flows in a channel that entirely relieves the English from the stiffness and mannerism of Roman literature. From this point the shades of the dark ages begin to mellow and vanish from these faint lines of light: the mind advances into new realms of thought, and goes out to seek for and labor in new mines of knowledge.

(*b*) The language of the Denmark, is that dialect of the Teutonic which is called the Scandinavian. It differs very little from the Swedish language: its chief difference seems to arise from the drawling tone, with which it is pronounced by the Danes. The pronunciation comes nearer to that of the Swedes. There is besides a greater admixture of German words in the Danish language than in the Swedish. It is but recently that the Danes have taken any pride in their language, however, all the laws and public inscriptions are in Danish.

(*a*) This message Augustin over the salt sea, from the south brought. I desired my true friends that they to me from of God the books on of holy men the manners and the wonders would write the following instruction.

Saxon translation.

How far this freedom in the instrument of thought induced the freedom of opinion which followed, and how far it cherished in the mind a desire for absolute liberty may be problematical: it could not, however, be entirely destitute of such tendency, and this influence upon the literature, at least, is clearly discernible. It was this influence, this power, which, for the most part, freed the mind of modern times from the errors of the past, from the literature of antiquity, that great mine of intellectual wealth, to which the learned of every succeeding age have resorted with the greatest avidity; and which, perpetuating its faults as well as its beauties, diffused itself into every tongue, seemed destined to impose itself upon every nation, and upon all coming time as the mould in which mind should be cast. Thus were the chains broken, and the great triumph of modern civilization and learning proclaimed.

The musical periods of the orator formed upon the Roman model, charmed the ear without enlightening the mind; the flourish of rhetoric, with its glare and tinsel, delighted the fancy, but did not refine the sensibilities, or improve the morals; the subtle logic of the schools was well calculated to foil an adversary or detect an error, but it had not the power of advancing man in the search of truth, nor did it direct him even to the contemplation and study of nature. "Socrates brought philosophy down from heaven, where she had been employed till then in contemplating the course of the stars, introduced her to practical affairs, and obliged her to direct her inquiries to what concern the man-

ners, the duties, the virtues and the vices of life ;” but she lost her true spirit of candor, of simplicity, and became filled with a spirit of finesse and superinduced verbal distinctions, and analytical dissections which finally robbed nature of beauty and the mind of penetration.

We are indebted to ancient literature for so much of our intellectual attainments that we overlook its want of adaptation to our times and interests, and allow ourselves to regard it only in the light of its beauty, its form, its artistic grace ; indeed it has contributed so much to mental advancement that it is difficult to exaggerate its benefaction to mankind ; but human genius, like human institutions, is better adapted to its own age than to any succeeding time. When new eras come upon the world, new genius, with enlarged views, going out in new directions, and fresh materials are wanted. Thus everything appears and flourishes and becomes obsolete in its turn. Thus for the advantage of mankind, have the master minds of every age, successively, flourished and disappeared ; though creatures of the age which they adorned, they left society better than they found it, because they wrote for its wants as well as for its taste and applause. Nothing but new teachers can carry on the progression ; if succeeding ages prove unfavorable, to the evolution of fresh talent, mind becomes stationary and receiving no fresh impulse, it declines from the adverse circumstances that surround it, and its want of adaptation to the times. Although in the radiance of their most auspicious eras, Greek and Roman learning was propi-

tious to society, yet incapable of sustaining itself, after it had reached its zenith, it fell from its lofty eminence and is utterly incapable of aiding further in the progress of mind and the advancement of civilization.

Since the fall of Rome, by the Gothic invasion, Roman literature has been partially revived a number of times, and sought to perpetuate itself in modern civilization; but the revolution wrought in modern tongues, in their departure from the original mechanism of language precluded the possibility of its adoption and perpetuity. When the English language came to maturity and evinced its capacity to embody and energize all the forms of thought, with the infinite emanations of truth and beauty, the Latin neglected and no longer employed by the scholastics, was naturally looked upon as a cumbersome and unwieldy instrument, and as an improper model notwithstanding the perfection of its form and the beauty of its finish.

The next step in this transformation, worthy of notice, is the verbal changes that were wrought in the Saxon; these changes are numerous and they continue to multiply till the language becomes settled. To detail all of them would be to write a dictionary such as has never been written; a few examples to illustrate the principle, will be enough. These changes are curious; there seems to be in each word a single letter that serves as its fundamental element, while all the rest change or disappear entirely, yet this retains all of its original power though it sometimes assumes a different form. *Ich*, in the Saxon becomes *I* in the English; *hit*, becomes *it*; *mowe*, *more*; *innan*, *in*;

108 FORMATION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

heo, *she*; thaes, *this*; thaet, *that*; se, *he*; hem, *them*; heora, *their*; ure, *our*; and habbe, *have*. The *particles* were all radically changed, but many of these changes took place before the time we are now contemplating, some, however, later: *gif* in the place of *if* was used as late as the time of Chaucer.

Gif Iuf be vertew, than is it leful thing

Gif it be vice, it is your undoing.

DOUGLAS.

The most important changes however, were wrought in the speech of England, in the thirteenth century at about which time the Saxon (*r*) era closes and the dim traces of the English begin to appear. The Saxon indeed is losing its distinctive features, and the English is easily identified; but still their features mingle and seem to be confused, for the change is gradual, and there is more, unhappily, to impede than to advance the progress of the native tongue. (*a*)

(*r*) See note C at the end of this vol.

(*a*) These constitute the most important changes effected in the transition of our language and literature, and the remarks already made are sufficient to suggest the great features of their progress, but it may not be amiss to enter more into detail and consider more minutely the grammatic changes that have been wrought. At this stage of the work some dry details of Saxon grammar may not be altogether uninteresting, to the reader, when they are immediately brought to show what the English was formed from.

Mr. Tyrwhitt's excellent essay, upon this point, for the correctness of which his name is a sufficient guarantee, shall be our guide, and as it is as difficult to improve his language as to detect an error in his reasoning, we shall change his words only as is necessary to adapt them to our purpose.

As our object is to show the process of the formation of the English language, or the simple transition of the Saxon, it is of no great importance to determine the precise time at which each change was effected, or exactly when any word or phrase became naturalized; and for the same reason we have no need to inquire minutely, with respect to the other alterations, which the Saxon language in its several stages appears to have undergone, how far they proceeded from the natural mutability of human speech, especially among an unlearned

Among those causes which aided the growth of English, the revival of the study of the common law

people, and how far they were owing to a successive conflux of Danish and Norman invaders.

1. The Saxon Article *se, seo, wat*,—which answers to the *ο, η, το*, of the Greeks, in all its varieties of gender, case, and number,—are laid aside, and instead of it an indeclinable *the* is prefixed to all sorts of nouns, in all cases, and in both numbers.

2. The Declensions of the Nouns Substantive are reduced from six to one; and instead of a variety of cases in both numbers, they have only a Genitive case Singular, which is uniformly deduced from the Nominative by adding to it *es*; or only *e*; if it ended in *e* feminine; and the same form is used to express the Plural number in all its cases; as, Nom. *Shour*, Gen. *Shoures*, Plur. *Shoures*, Nom. *Nams*, Gen. *Names*, Plur. *Numes*.

There are a few exceptions to this principle, which retain their termination in *en* from the second Declension of the Saxons; as *oxen*, &c. Others seem to have adopted it from euphony; as *brethren*, *eyren*, instead of *broðra*, *æyru*. And a few seem to have been always irregularly declined; as *men*, *wimmin*, *mice*, *lice*, *feet*, &c.

The Nouns Adjective lost all distinction of Gender, Case, or Number.

3. The primitive Pronouns obtain one oblique case in each number: as *Ic*, or *I*; *We*: Obl. *Me*; *us*:—*Thou*; *Ye*: Obl. *Thee*; *You*. *He*, *She*: *They*: (*Hi*, *Hem*, and *Hir*, were used as late as the time of Robert of Gloucester, instead of, *Thy*, *Him*, and *Their*.) Obl. *Hem*, *Him*.

The Interrogative and Relative *Who*, had a Genitive and Accusative case, *Whose* and *Whom*, but no variety of Number.

On the contrary, the Demonstrative, *This* and *That*, had a Plural expression, *Thise*, and *Tho*, (*This* and *Those*,) but no variety of case.

The other words, which are often, though improperly, placed in the class of Pronouns, are all undeclinable like the Adjectives.

It may be proper here to take a little notice of the Pronoun, or Pronominal Adjective, *Self*, which our best grammarians, from Wallis downwards, have attempted to metamorphose into a substantive. In the Saxon language, it is certain that *Sylf* was declined like other Adjectives, and was joined in construction with Pronouns Personal and Substantives, just as *ipse* is in Latin.

They said, *Ic*, *Sylf*, *Ego ipse*; *Min sylfes*, *Mei ipsius*; *Me sylfre*, *Me ipsium*, &c. *Petrus sylf*, *Petrus ipse* &c. [See Hicker, Gr. A. S. p. 26.] In the age of Chaucer, *self*, like other Adjectives, was become undeclined. Though he writes, *self*, *selve*, and *selven*, those varieties do not denote any distinction of

deserves to be mentioned. Through the middle ages, in addition to the study of ancient literature in a for-

case or number; for he uses indifferently, *himself* and *himselven*: *hemself* and *he mselven*.

He joins it with Substantives, in the sense of *ipse* as the Saxons did. But this great departure from the ancient usage was with respect to the Pronouns Personal prefixed to *self*. Instead of declining them through the cases which they still retained, he used constantly, *My self*, for *I self*, and *Me self*; *Thy self*, for *Thou self* and *Thee self*; *Him self* and *Hire self*, for *He self* and *She self*; and in the Plural number, *Our self*, for *We self*, and *Us self*; *Your self*, for *Ye self* and *You self*; and *Hem self*, for *They self*.

It would be vain to attempt to defend this practice of Chaucer upon any principles of reason or grammatical analogy. All that can be said for it is, that perhaps any regular practice was preferable to the confusion and uncertainty which seems to have prevailed before. Accordingly, the writers who succeeded him following his example, it became a rule of the English language, that Personal Pronouns prefixed to *Self*, were only used in one case in each number, viz: those of the First and Second Person in the Genitive case, according to the Saxon form, and those of the Third in the Accusative.

By degrees a custom was introduced of annexing *Self* to Pronouns in the Singular number only, and *Selves*, (a corruption of *Selven*) to those in the Plural. This probably contributed to persuade our late Grammarians that *Self* was a Substantive; as the true English Adjective does not vary in the Plural number.

The metaphysical Substantive *Self*, of which our more modern Philosophers and Poets have made so much use, was unknown in the time of Chaucer.

4. The Verbs reduced to the simple state, retained four modes; the Indicative, the Imperative, the Subjunctive, and the Infinitive; and only two expressions of Time, the Present and the Past. All the other varieties of Mode and Time are expressed by Auxiliary Verbs.

In the inflections of the verbs, in the Plural number, the old Saxon form, *We loveth*, *Ye loveth*, *They loveth*, was a long time retained; and the Teutonic forms; *We loven*, *Ye loven*, *They loven*, were occasionally adopted till after the time of Chaucer.

The Saxon termination of the Infinitive in *an*, changes into *en*; to *loven* to *liven*, &c., when the *n* is finally dropped; to *love*, to *live*.

The Participle of the Present Time; *lovende* or *ande*, changed its termination into *ing*; though both forms are found some times, used indiscriminately.

5. The indeclinable parts of Speech, remain pure Saxon; a great number undergo a change in the letters that compose them; but the more considerable alterations, by which some are disfigured, are fairly deducible from that propensity to

eign language, the study of the civil and canon law, consequent upon the recovery of the imperial code in the twelfth century, was unfavorable to modern tongues; although this study tended to civilize society, by introducing more correct ideas concerning the nature of government, and by creating a necessity for

abbreviation, for which the inhabitants of the island have been long remarkable.

The French Adjectives which had a distinction of Gender and Number, upon this naturalization, were generally stripped of both and reduced to the simple state of the English Adjective, without Case, Gender or Number.

The French Verbs layed aside all their differences of Conjugation. *Accorder*, *souffrir*, *recevoir*, *descendre*, were regularly changed into—*accorded*, *suffered*, *received*, *descended*, and these are farther abbreviated into—*accord*, *descend*, &c.

They brought with them only two Tenses, the Present and the Past; nor did they retain any singularity of Inflection, which could distinguish them from other verbs of Saxon growth.

The Participle of the Past time adopted almost universally, the regular Saxon termination in *ed*; as *accorded*, *suffered*, *received*, *descended*. It even frequently assumed the prepositive particle *ge ze* (or *y*, as it was latterly written) which among the Saxons was very generally, though not peculiarly, prefixed to the Participle.

Thus it will be seen that the Saxon language was complete in all its parts, and had served for the purposes of discourse, and even of composition in various kinds, long before there was any connection with the French, and there was no necessity nor inducement to alter its original and radical constitution, or even its customary forms. Accordingly, we have just seen, that in all the essential parts of speech, the characteristic features of the Saxon Idiom are always preserved: and so far is our language from yielding to, or partaking of the nature of the French idiom, as it is often though unjustly alleged, we shall find upon examination, that the crowd of French words, which from time to time were imported, are themselves made subject either immediately or by degrees, to the laws of the Saxon Idiom.

The words which were thus imported are chiefly Nouns Substantive, Adjectives, Verbs, and Participles. The Adverbs, which are derived from French Adjectives, seem to have been formed from them after they were Anglicised, as they have all the Saxon termination *lich* (old Saxon) or *ly*, instead of the Frenchment.

As to the other indeclinable parts of speech, our language, being sufficiently rich in its own stores, has borrowed nothing from France, except perhaps an Interjection or two.

112 FORMATION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

a higher standard of learning in the framing of laws, and the administration of justice, still by giving such a decided direction to the study of jurisprudence and the affairs of state, it proved injurious to polite learning. Its adoption as a scholastic science, thereby rendering a knowledge of it a necessary recommendation to promotion of any kind connected with learning,—even to obtain ecclesiastical dignities,—gave a wrong impulse to the mind. During those ages, society was absorbed with one idea, and its study become universal. It was esteemed the most important branch of study in the plan of academical education, and the study of true science and polite learning being neglected, the mind of those times was absorbed in the study of the law, which was treated with the same spirit of finesse and mysticism which had been carried into theology and philosophy: and thus, overwhelmed with commentaries that disclaimed all elegance of language, it served to exercise the mind only as it afforded materials for framing the flimsy labyrinths of casuistry.

Upon the revival of the common law, this tendency was in part checked; and in the reign of Edward I. a number of writers arose: the law was suddenly perfected, its outlines defined, and its foundations established; and it at once imparted to society an element of stability and regularity.

This was no unimportant element in a confused and fluctuating state of affairs such as then prevailed. This period was employed in effecting that great revolution which changed Europe from its primitive to

its modern state; the elements of society were in constant commotion and nothing was regular or stable. Hence the advantage of an organized institution, the wise and restrictive influences of civil liberty.

This too was almost the only thing that rebuked or tended to allay the spirit of romance and fiction which pervaded every thing. For ages, reason, judgment and taste seemed to slumber for no other purpose than to allow fancy to create a universe for herself, and paint it in her own bright and varied hues. Her boundaries were undefined, her empire undisputed, and the genius of fiction had all the departments of life and all the kingdoms of nature at her command. Not content with clothing every known form with some fairy shape, and exhausting and garnishing this world, it proceeded to imagine new. The passion for romance became universal: the honor of the delightful author outshone the laurel, and the sturdy knight laid aside his mail and trophied lance to administer to the taste for reading romance which was popular and prevalent, alike, among the great, the fair, the learned and the unlearned; the clergy yielded to the passion of the times, laid aside the sacerdotal robe, and read, translated and composed. The exercise of the imagination became the great characteristic of the intellect of Europe; it was exercised in every thing, and gave an impulse to all: all life, all religion became a romance. "Prevailing in the established theology it filled heaven with saints: purgatory with sinners: and earth with relics, transubstantiation, heresies, miracles, and monks." History, chemistry, geogra-

114 FORMATION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

phy, medicine and astronomy were affected, controlled by it, and it even haunted the schoolmen. It was however, excluded from the law, whose sacred precincts are guarded against the approach of imagination.

ROMANCE.



THE GEST OF KING HORN.

What resounds
In fable or *romance* of Uther's son,
Begirt with British and Amorle knights,

MILTON.

Some *romances* entertain the genius and strengthen it by the noble ideas which they give of things.

DRYDEN.

A *romance* is a discourse, invented with art, to please and improve the mind by instructions disguised under the allegory of an action or series of actions; it consists of two parts; a moral, as its foundation and end; and a fable or action as its superstructure or means. It must have manners: the incidents must be delightfully disposed and surprising; its sentiments fall under the same rules of those of the drama,—but the diction is allowed to be more lofty and figurative; and must have admiration, instead of pity and terror, for its end.

A *romance* of chivalry is a fiction, in verse or prose, in which the principle characters are knights conducting themselves in their several situations and adventures, agreeably to the institutions and customs of chivalry.

The fiction and fancy of these ages, though pregnant with the germs of thought, are not relished by the classic taste; the forms in which they are embodied are grotesque and their colors glaring. Truth and the light of science had not yet chased away the specters of illusive fancy, and the imagination, delighting itself in brooding over the gloom of ignorance and supersti-

tion, conceived a world of images, which have served as the materials for succeeding ages to improve upon. Taste does not relish nor reason approve these crude productions, yet they form a part of the history of intellect as well as literature, and they are the earnest of a better state of things.

Imagination may be termed, in a certain sense, the light of the mind; it may be predicted, when its traces appear, that a dawn is approaching; that the spirit is brooding upon the chaotic mass and that light will soon break forth. "And like the goddess of the mountain, heralded by the rising sun, and known by the streams of brightness that follow in her train, as she scatters her flowers through the meadows and valleys," so fiction comes,

"Upon her vagrant wings
Wafting ten thousand colors through the air,
Which by the glances of her magic eye
She blends and shifts at will through countless forms,
Her wild creation."

Wild theories and illusive schemes are the natural characteristics of an age possessed of great activity and vigor of thought: where there is nothing visionary, there is nothing spiritual; and sensuality and materialism predominate in the absence of mental excitement. The intellect of Germany fills the greater part of German history: there they have fewer readers than authors, who dream and write for each other; hence a large portion of the strange lights which have surprised the world came from the land of Goethe and Schiller. Every age and nation that has displayed great intellectual activity has also been

characterised by romantic schemes, by a predominance of the imagination.

From the inconvenience resulting from a perversion of the imagination, or, rather from its disproportionate development in comparison with the other powers of the mind, some are inclined to check rather than cherish it, and to reject indiscriminately all its productions, all its romantic conceptions. It is necessary therefore, to discriminate between the abuse of it, and its legitimate office.

The heathful exercise of the imagination is no less beneficial than delightful; removed from the active and exciting scenes of life, accustoming ourselves to commune with our own thoughts, a habit of solitary reflection is acquired, so that the objects of perception cease to make strong impressions upon the mind: then, so long as it does not yield itself entirely to the control of the imagination, the fruits of reflection and profound thought will appear. These intellectual exercises, create an indifference to the affairs of the external world, and at the same time afford most ample exercise to the affections, and so long as the dreams of the imagination do not assume the semblance of realities, these habits tend alike to purify and elevate the social and intellectual nature of man. By strengthening the affections, and rendering the sensibilities more delicate, they refine and ennoble human nature, and it is only by an *excessive* indulgence in the enchanting pleasures of the imagination, that the taste becomes so fastidious as to unfit one from deriving any enjoyment from nature or the com-

mon concerns of life, and to delight only in the dreams of romance.

Such is the constitution of human nature, that romance seems to be an essential element of intellectual life and activity. In its various forms, it constitutes an important part of human felicity. It is the constant companion of life; associated with the earliest recollections, it inspires the fascinating dreams of youth and gilds the golden visions of riper years. It soothes the mind when agitated; rouses it when dormant, recreates it when wearied, and is a panacea for most of the ills that it is subject to. It makes the mind superior to the circumstances which surround it, by eliciting and delighting it with the hopes of the future; by engaging its attention and developing its powers at that period when the soul is most active and impressible, a period to which it has imparted such a charm, and over which it has shed such a lustre, that it heightens in enchantment and increases in beauty and attraction as we recede from it.

“ Place me along the rocks I love
Which sound to ocean’s wildest roar,
I ask but this, again to rove
Through scenes my youth hath known before.”

The tone, the vigor, and the vivacity of the mind depend in no small degree, upon the spirit of romance which the young imagination drinks in when attention is attracted, and it beholds for the first time the wonders of nature displayed. The influence is incalculable, and impressions are then made which are never effaced.

"Beloved moment ! then it was I caught
The first foundation of romantic thought.

Its influence does not cease here ; when the mature mind drinks with wrapt delight the thrilling story and *follows with enchanted step the mazes of the wild and wondrous tale*, its powers are expanded, and its conceptions enlarged ; in this exercise of the intellect and the heart, the whole being is quickened and exalted, its hopes elevated, and magnificent designs for future life are conceived.

"I hied me to the thick o'er hanging shade,
And there on mossy carpet listless laid,
While at my feet the rippling runnel ran,
The days of wild romance antique I'd scan,
*Soar on the wings of fancy through the air
To realms of light, and pierce the radiance there."*

Though stern philosophy rejects indiscriminately all fiction, and beauty is frowned upon for even regarding it ; and although it is customary to smile at the superstitions of ancient times, yet as they were founded upon the unalterable principles of human nature, they never cease to interest, and they can never be entirely rejected ; and pure and noble fictions cannot fail to benefit mankind, no less than the creations of imagination in sculpture and painting, where the marble is made to breathe and the canvas to speak. Noble fictions, which are the grand conceptions of the intellect are the revelations of truth displayed in such form, and painted in such colors, that its entire bearings are brought within comprehension, and at the same time contemplated with delight.

T'hough to the eye of reason, this world seems to be

a blest and delightful abode, yet the spirit, unsatisfied with it, and ever longing for something purer, brighter and nobler, has in all time, and in all ages, where there has been any intellectual life, amused and raised itself by its own creations. Man seems always to have been impressed with the conviction that he was destined for some higher sphere, some nobler consummation; that he was existing amid powers and agencies superior to himself; and although the forms which these notions assume have differed, adapting themselves to circumstances, yet the same fundamental belief has been embodied and displayed in every conceivable shape. Often perverted, yet always exercising the imagination, and addressing itself to the hopes and the fears of man, this faith has served as the great spring of human activity, and vastly accelerated the progress of human improvement.

The images of fancy, and the creations of the imagination are the pictures of our own mysterious being, and the *truth* is always more complicated, more wonderful, and more difficult of solution than the *fiction* and the fable. However diversified the forms the works of fancy may assume, they cannot display all of the secret springs and varied features of the soul; nor exhibit fully the wonderful, the *magic* power of the passions, in transforming this mysterious being; and yet a mixture of truth and error, like all human productions, they often give more *forcible* representations than philosophy can effect. The mental or the moral philosopher, after all his boasted precision, employs figurative, oftener than literal language: the vocabula-

ry of the most perfect language, possesses but a small proportion of abstract terms; and fewer still that are strictly adapted to the expression of mere mental phenomena: nor can the most common wants be expressed without recourse to figures of speech, so that in this respect romance stands upon the same ground with philosophy and common sense.

Upon the revival of learning, after the conquest, the ideal histories, relating to the adventures of ancient heroes originating in Wales and Bretagne, attracted attention. These, enlarged and improved, were perpetuated in the tales of troubadours and minstrels, and enriched from other sources, till in the thirteenth century all the elements of fiction and romance seem to be collected from all regions, and thrown together, forming a universal store from which the poet is to obtain his richest materials, and from which the marvelous machineries of romance are to be framed. To the romantic tales of Britany were added the gorgeous scenery, the enchanted castles, magicians, fairies, sultans and viziers of Chaldea, Persia and Arabia. The superstitions, and the institutions, that exercised the imagination, and were particularly calculated to engender fiction and romance, then exerted their strongest influence and were in full vigor.

The feudal system had arisen out of the discordant state into which society was thrown upon the dissolution of the empire, and nourished the first seeds of science and literature. In the baronial halls, and embattled castles had sprung up those sentiments of devotion and honor which produced the spirit of gal-

lantry, and developed themselves in the institution of chivalry.

The rudiments of chivalry, which the Goths displayed in their belief of a divine and prophetic power inherent in their women, readily developed into the institution of chivalry which under the feudal system was formally established, and the members of which were received with regular ceremonies. Chivalry in a measure grew out of the feudal system, but when the feudal tenure began to disappear, then chivalry appeared in its greatest splendor.

These institutions owed their births to the states of society in which they existed, and yet they tended to ameliorate those conditions. Whatever may have been the particular evils of the feudal system, it nourished the cardinal virtue of making obligations sacred; it gave sacredness to faith and created confidence between man and man. The sentiment created by the oath of fealty, became so powerful as to make the bravest men endure every thing for the honor of their sovereign and to exercise the most disinterested motives. Honor, courtesy, loyalty and generosity were the essential virtues of chivalry.

In cherishing these noble sentiments, they promoted in some degree the growth of refinement, and advancement of civilization. They created a set of ideas, and nourished a class of sentiments which were to live and to exert an influence when the exigencies which occasioned them no longer existed, and the institutions themselves had ceased to exist, except in name. They impressed upon the mind of man the

necessity of character, and the importance of action, of devotion, in attaining it; and thus was he urged on to improvement when incentives less sensual had no power, no attraction.

The principle which is antagonistic to society, opposed to all social order and harmony, and which seems always to exist in some form, and to exercise a greater or less influence, prevailing at this time, disqualified the minds of men, for all purposes of society; they possessed no ideas extending beyond themselves; they were destitute of common sentiments, and common interests; and they needed some common impulse, a common object, to excite them to action and unite them in a common cause. Their mental horizon was bounded by self, and they needed some noble principles to elevate them, to give them a more extended view.

The feudal constitution secured allegiance to the lord, and at the same time left him supreme: there was none above him in rank or state: thus elevated, he conceived grand conceptions concerning the dignity and importance of individual man, and was elated with the flattering notions of noble descent. This ambitious pride mingled readily with the spirit of chivalry, and a crowd of noble sentiments and splendid achievements sprang into existence. Imagination was kindled and enflamed, and the mind thus emerging from barbarism was preparing to enjoy and demand, intellectual pleasures, and intellectual pursuits.

Though some of the enchanting fictions of Arabia

had been already realized, by commerce and intercommunication, yet the crusades, pregnant with enterprise and lofty faith, while they tended to abridge some of the evils of the feudal system, opened to the awakened mind a new world of wonders; introduced it to new scenes, manners, and customs, and displayed the treasures of Arabian sciences: all of which served to create an interest in the study of the arts, religions and languages. The idea of a christian buckling on his armor and going out to emancipate the holy land, shed an unfading luster upon the achievements of arms, heightened the spirit of chivalry, and consecrated and adorned the themes of romantic song. Thus fiction, blended with religion, and tintured with the passions and prejudices of men, infused itself into every institution of these superstitious ages, and romance was the ruling passion of the times. It created intellectual life, and gave an impulse to the native tongue which nothing else under the same circumstances could have effected.

Religion and learning were corrupted by this union, and neither could prosper or attain any permanent improvements without a stable and cultivated native language.

The problem of civilization, after all the light that has been thrown upon it, and the various demonstrations that have been given, is not perfectly clear nor settled beyond a doubt. For instance: all the elements of modern civilization existed in the fifth century; yet during the two centuries that elapsed after the English language came to maturity and attained

its greatest perfection, society advanced farther and displayed greater improvements than it had done during the ten that intervened ! Whence is this irregularity and inequality ?

The importance of a vernacular language and literature is conceived by observing the slow progress civilization makes, deprived of their influence ; and by contemplating the external condition of society where these influences are not displayed ; but they cannot be duly appreciated without descending into the depths of its existence, and unfolding the poverty and wretchedness of its internal, mental state.

Rhymed histories and metrical romances succeeded the rude jests and love tales of the minstrel and troubadour, and formed the first permanent specimens of modern literature. A passion for rhyming at once seized the mind of writers and these productions multiplied rapidly, and made reading popular among all classes ; they supplied an intellectual want, and interested and educated the general mind of society ; they roused the moral sympathies, and kindled the imagination, by the enchantment of fiction, and the charms of infant poetry. The sparks of learning which had been almost extinguished, were now fanned, and the feeble flame began to spread : the natural feelings were excited, and became active, and there was a violent struggle made to shake from the mind the deep slumbers of the middle ages. These first efforts in learning and romance writing were the omens of the approaching dawn. The grey lines began to streak the east and the long night of ignorance was mellowed

by the rising beams of science. Long had it been said, "Watchman tell us of the night," but he had left the altar, and the vestal spark was reluctantly lingering.

"Alas! how faint
How slow the dawn of Beauty and of Truth,
Breaks the reluctant shades of Gothic night,
Which yet involve the nations."

As books were exceedingly rare and difficult to be obtained,—a single copy being valued at the price of an ample estate, and its purchase and transfer accompanied with the same ceremony and solemnity,—these fictions were caught up and read with the greatest avidity: they electrified the mind of the community. To excel in this species of composition became the great object of emulation; for all could study, relish, and appreciate it. Rhyming became such a prevailing fashion of literature and acquired so much currency that it was introduced into history: the laws of Justinian and the rules of monasteries were embodied in rhymed verse.

From the time of the conquest to the thirteenth century the Norman French was the prevailing language: the laws were written in it as were the first specimens of vernacular literature; but for the benefit and by the influence of that class of people who had never become familiar with the French, translations were made:

"To lewd men of England
That can nothing but English understand,
Therefore this treatise outdraw I would
In English."

Among the first of these productions is a romance of chivalry entitled the "Gest of King Horn," in which most of the peculiarities of fiction and romance are displayed. The hero is adorned with every possible accomplishment that the writer's mind could conceive.

"Ne sun might shine on
Fairer child than he was."

To his personal beauty, are added valor and intrepidity. He needs none of the charms of music or the display of armor to excite him to action; his own mind suggests the incentive, and he is as ready to attack a legion as to engage on equal terms:

"He was fair and eke bold."

He is not only beautiful, a true and valorous knight, but is possessed with the accomplishments of music and poetry, which he displays to the wonder and admiration of all.

"Horn set him a bench
His harp he began to clench,
He made Rymentild a lay."

Beloved by the princess, he is elevated from a state of servitude to the rank of knight, and finally forms a royal alliance; the charm of his genius becomes irresistible, and the princess becoming passionately enamored of him, commands his submission to her will:

"Horn," quoth she, "well—long
I have loved the strong
Thou shalt thy troth plight
In mine hand with rite
Me to spouse welde."

This is the prototype of modern romances and fictitious compositions. The favorite characters of the writer are the perfect models of the times. By applying himself assiduously to those pursuits which were *considered* most honorable, the hero is made to attain what in the same estimation is the highest preferment. As literature advances, the characters, the scenes, and the imagery change ; but the same principles are displayed in the endless variety of forms which are assumed to adapt them to the taste and varying manners of varying time.

POETRY AND PROSE.



A *poem* is the work of a *poet*; *poesy* is his skill or craft of making; the very fiction itself, *the reason or form of the work*.

BEN JONSON.

A *poet* is a maker as the word signifies; and he that cannot make, that is, invent, hath his name for nothing.

DRYDEN.

How far have we
Profaned thy heavenly gift of *poesy*?
Made prostitute and profligate the muse
Whose harmony was first ordained above
For tongues of angels.

Id.

Poetry doth raise and erect the mind by submitting the theory of things to the desires of the mind.

BACON.

They best can judge a *poet's* worth
Who oft themselves have known
The pangs of a poetic birth
By labors of their own.

COWPER.

The poetic forms of language are obviously distinguished from the poetry of thought; for while both may combine, and in their union afford the only perfect exhibition of the power of each, as in our unequalled Milton, the latter is not to be denied to some of our distinguished prose writers, as for instance, Milton's great contemporary, Jeremy Taylor. * * *

In an intellectual nature, framed for progress and for higher modes of being, there must be creative energies, powers of original and ever-growing thought; and *poetry* is the form in which these energies are chiefly manifested.

CHANNING.

If he is formed to be a *poet*, he watches the humanity in his own breast, in order to comprehend its infinitely changing play upon the wide theatre of the world; he subjects luxuriant fancy to the discipline of taste, and suffers the sober intellect to survey the banks, between which the stream of inspiration is to leap and sparkle.

SCHILLER.

The fourteenth century is the most interesting and important era in the history of the English language; it now assumes a definite form and is clothed with a new dress; its Gothic features are effaced, the Saxon characters are laid aside, attesting that the night of Gothic ignorance has gone down the sky, and heralding the ascension of literature and truth. Writers now arise who, clothing their thoughts in their native tongue, refine, adorn, and dignify it. This age affords one, at least, who rises above the office of the mere translator, and sketching his images from nature herself, is the prototype of that mighty genius *who held the mirror up to nature* and brought the universe within the enchanted circle of his poetic power.

At this stage of the language, the real value of an author does not depend so much upon the instruction communicated, or the pleasure imparted, as upon the manner in which he employs language, tending to improve it, by using it correctly, preserving its purity, and giving stability to its own idiom; and every such service is a bequest to posterity. This is a simple, a severe test, and excludes many from the pale of authorship. Each writer, however, is to be judged by the standard of his own age. His works are subject to the same laws, by which progression in the arts is regulated; the very spirit of improvement which he infuses into them—unless they be the consummation of

his art—creates farther improvement, and his own productions are left behind the age by the very impulse they gave to it. Thus by a single impulse, a chain of sequences is put into operation which multiply and vibrate throughout all time; the spirit of improvement, when once awakened and excited, enters every institution where she is welcomed, and rests only in perfection.

Thus far the transition and formation of the language seems to have been effected by its own innate laws acting under the force of circumstances. History records in the past, some brilliant names, but they are unconnected with the progress and improvement of the language; clothing their conceptions in a foreign tongue they added little or nothing to the creation of thought, and are consigned to a peaceful obscurity. Brunne, Mandeville, Wicliffe, Gower, and Chaucer, alone appear during this period and mark its progress and improve their native language. The services, however, which they performed were various and differ widely in degrees of merit; some opened new channels for English, and made it free of access; others prevented the influx of foreign terms and purified its elements: though long repressed, the stream gushing up from the Saxon fountain began to spread, and as it flowed on precipitating its Gothic forms, it deposited its native gems, and truth and beauty sprang up and flourished wherever it was diffused. The earth became vocal with instruction and song; each leaflet and stream had its charming story, and each star an audible voice. All nature is plastic in the hands of

genius, whatever it touches it forms and executes to its will. The diversity of talent which this period possessed, and the different means employed contributed to the same end ; but poetry in these early ages was the most efficient instrument in the hands of genius for improving and polishing the language.

This is illustrated by recurring to the origin of poetry, and considering the object and effect of measure and rhyme.

Modern poetry had its humble though eventful birth from jesters and fiddlers, who cultivated the talent of the day, and amused the popular feelings. In its infancy the same person was poet and songster, the poet composed and sung his own wild lays ; then music and poetry mutually depended upon each other, for interest and effect, and it was when combined, when the

" Blest pair of syrens voice and verse
Wed their divine sounds,"

that the greatest triumph of either of the infant arts was effected. As the art advanced, the musician was separated from the composer ; poetry assumed a higher, nobler, and more versatile character. At first the highest ambition of the poet was to please, and he did not attempt to instruct ; the popular topic of the day tinctured with the ruling passion and colored with the superstitions of the times, was his theme ; in barbarous ages, it was war and rapine ; as society advanced religion and love were celebrated. The minstrel, wandering from place to place, adapted his subject to the company ; he sought the blessing and enjoyed the cheer of the pious monk in his cloistered

cell and sung to the fair feudatory in her inaccessible castle, amid embattled towers, crowned with every association that was calculated to inspire the heart and inflame the imagination.

While he had no higher aim than to please, and sought no reward but gifts and entertainment, as the taste of the times was gross, and the manners corrupt, his profession became corrupt also, and only tended to strengthen and inflame the basest passions. The charms of his fiction and the magical effects of his language and music were irresistible; a weak moral sense could not withstand the power of his perverted genius and his popularity became alarming. The power of his poesy could not be extinguished, and to avert the consequences of its perversion, the minstrel was banished, the church and the cloister. Thus debased and subjected to disgrace, beauty frowned upon him; denied admittance to the cell and the castle, and receiving no reward for his profession, the extinction of the class was inevitable. But his delightful art survived; it was taken from him without ceremony and transplanted from the street and the banquet to a more congenial soil. Religion and literature adopted it, and it became a study, and was blended with innocent amusement and instruction. Through the influence of the ladies and the clergy of the reign of Henry I. delight was thus happily combined with utility; beauty and royal patronage elevated the minstrel's art and infused into it a literary taste; cultivated in the court of Henry, and cherished by the queen, poetry soon acquired the ability to bestow upon her

votaries, wealth and fame : studied by the scholar and patronized by the great, it assumed a permanent form and incorporated itself with the literature of the times. The union was immortal, for poetry and polite learning are inseparable.

In the early stages of poetry, its form as has been seen,—consisting, as it did, of short sentences and bold imagery, expressing the passions without any connection with the reflective powers,—is scarcely distinguished from prose. Its object is to give vent to the feelings and to strike the imagination ; to effect which the briefest and most condensed mode of expression is employed : the unlettered enthusiast, inspired with joyful emotions, or struck with sublime conceptions, indulged in the spontaneous overflow of his soul, and bestowed but little attention upon the mode of expression. These rude beginnings were not arranged in *rhythm* ; this is of later growth ; it sprang not from nature, but is of conventional origin.

By looking into their origin we shall learn the nature, and distinguish the appropriate office of rhyme and rhythm ; and it will be seen at the same time, that if poetry in its highest sense, that is, vested with all its graces, is not passionately, and universally admired, it is because it is not understood.

Rhythm owes its origin entirely to music, and its object is not to regulate the enunciation of the verse but to adapt it to melody, beyond which poetry does not aspire ; as verse emulates music only in respect to melody, without aspiring to harmony.

The meaning of the original word from which *rhythm* is derived, is, *to set to music*, to form according to rule, *to measure*; and when poetry was set to music, rhythm was employed as the measure, in the obvious sense of that term.

The alternate occurrence of long and short syllables is always agreeable to the ear, and in this respect poetry is superior to prose, as its melody is more perfect; and it possesses an intonation and sweetness more nearly allied to music itself. As harmony arises from co-existing sounds, this consonance of words and regular flow of verse approach the fine harmonies of musical sound, and form one of the sweet springs of intellectual pleasures. They touch some of the finest chords of melodious sensibility that the soul possesses; and this grateful beauty, this delightful enchantment, is silently enjoyed without any audible sound. The cultivated taste instinctively feels and relishes these fine consonancies and peculiar combinations of syllables: the intellect is responsive and appreciates and enjoys these beauties without any sensuous instrumentality, and unknown sympathies are awakened.

The obscurity in which the history of rhyme is involved renders its precise origin uncertain; and although all are not agreed with regard to the cause of it, whether it was owing to caprice or had its existence in the nature of things, yet its utility in one respect cannot be called in question. It was one of the principal poetical forms in the infancy of the art, and does not appear to be entirely unknown to any

nation where letters have been cultivated to any extent.

Besides the musical power which it exerts by a variety of similar sounds, occurring at regular intervals, it seems to be of importance in the actual mechanism of verse, and discharges the office of a distinct part of speech in connecting the lines. No part of speech can produce that intimate and beautiful connection between two lines that rhyme effects; by closing them with two similar sounds, they coalesce and mould themselves into a single form and this symmetrical union, founded upon such a slight, yet beautiful arrangement, produces an intellectual gratification which heightens the musical effects of rhyme and measure.

The selection required in the formation of metrical composition to effect a nice arrangement and exact significance, breathes into language the spirit of improvement. It is like preparing and arranging the marble for the edifice, or the jewels for the diadem, with the advantage that the preparation of a single element of the language answers for all purposes throughout all time; it may be multiplied to any extent and combined in every conceivable form. Wherever a beautiful thought has been happily expressed, the words embodying it have survived their time, and have never become obsolete; they appear like gold dust amidst the ruins of time. The sentiment and the expression have embalmed them; they found a lodgment in the memory and the heart, and are become as imperishable as the glories of the firmament.

This is the characteristic feature, the power, which gives to poetry the denomination of the divinest of all the arts. It is in a measure independent of time and circumstances, and enjoys a certain immunity from human caprice and convention.

The opinions and manners of every age are peculiar to it and pass away with it ; as taste is cultivated and becomes refined, it relishes higher beauties and requires greater perfection in the models of beauty ; and the objects that once pleased become matters of indifference and finally of disgust, but poetry is the *impersonation of beauty* herself and her features are always fresh.

As the boundaries of knowledge are extended, the understanding is enlarged ; it adopts new modes of reasoning and marks out new paths of thought ; but admiration of the beautiful is an instinctive, intuitive exercise of the intellect and the affections. Mind is progressive and the objects addressed to it must adapt themselves to its increasing capacity ; poetry is a spirit, an ideal perfection. It is the unfolding of the germs of man's future being which are wrapt up in his immortal soul, and differing only in the manner in which they are displayed.

Poetry is the most perfect realization of the principle, that all real, permanent, improvement of human ty, of society, of civilization, depends entirely upon the development of the inner, individual man ; and by its power and universal presence, it tends directly to harmonize the conflicting elements of his being. It dissipates the recklessness of the barbarian, bringing him

into subjection to reason and taste ; and unbinds the fetters of the savage, setting him free of sensualism and inanity. Human laws may restrain the actions, and determine in a measure the conduct of men, *but beauty alone reigns in the heart, to transform the being and elevate the standard of man.*

It is thus that poetry and the fine arts are connected with the history of every civilized nation. If taste and liberty are not perfected at the same time, it is because, that by oppression the mind is turned inward, and recurring to the dignity of its own nature in the vindication of its rights, it then displays those consummate forms of beauty and truth which have been produced after the spirit of independence has yielded to inglorious submission, and which are the recreated images of its own being.

At the close of the reign of Edward the First, a poet, Robert de Brunne appears, and although he is a mere translator and narrator of events in rhyme, he deserves particular notice, as he is a smooth and easy versifyer, and imitates his originals with great fidelity and felicity. Tedious and uncouth as he often is, in easting the theology of his age, in rhyme, he contributed to the improvement of morals, and at the same time, improved the style, and taught a poetical expression. He is the father of narrative poetry which Chaucer, Spenser and Dryden carried to a resplendent state of cultivation ; and he has made himself farther interesting by the mixture of story and ethics which his works display. He wrote for the wants of those who were unacquaint-

ed with the French and paid the highest homage to the native tongue.

“ For lewd men I undertook
On English tongue to make this book.”

Sometimes he rises above himself and exhibits some happy strokes of imagination; in one of his anecdotes, the influence of music is well expressed:

“ He loved much to hear the harp;”

he says that it sharpens the wit, soothes and delights the mind and its charms destroy the power of the fiend. He too, consecrated music to worship, and in allusion to David the divine poet, he commands them to worship heaven's King, with the harp, the taboret and all the instruments of music.

The meeting of the king of the Britains with the beautiful and accomplished princess Rouwen, is beautifully expressed, in the “ Brut of England” which is his most extensive work. The king pays to beauty the admiration of a noble heart; and they pass round the gold cup and drink after the custom of saluting with a kiss:

“ That says Wasselle drinking of the cup
And kissing his fellow he gives it up.”

He complains already of the adulterations of the language and rejects with contempt the *strange English* which writers are attempting to introduce. And it is to be observed, that from the time the Normans invaded Britain, the language has had to maintain a constant struggle against the innovation of foreign terms and idioms. Words are admitted with far less ceremony than the constitution enjoins upon adopted citizens,

and it is not uncommon to meet with works in which the foreign elements predominate. If, in the early stages of the language, when it was barren and needed to be enriched from other sources, there was cause of complaint against these innovations, it cannot be prudence, nor wisdom to tolerate them after it has become sufficiently rich and copious for all purposes.

SIR JOHN MANDEVILLE.

Mandeville is considered the founder of English prose as Chaucer, of poetry, and besides showing the progress of the language, his writings exhibit quite a general view of the state of the science in this age: particularly that of astronomy, which is, in a manner, the foundation of all the other arts and sciences.

It is a common observation that there is a natural affinity existing between the sciences and that they are all of equal importance, but astronomy precedes all others in the order of time and influence. The structure of the firmament is among the first objects which engages the attention of the mind and elevates it to a contemplation worthy of its powers. Until the causes of these phenomena are revealed, and the illusions of the imagination dissipated, superstition maintains possession of the soul, paralyzing its energies and clothing the world with spectral forms and shadows. When correct ideas are formed with regard to these things and man discovers his elevated position in the economy of the Universe, his mind becomes lucid as the firmament above him, and he is prepared to go forth in the discharge of his duties. Mandeville is famed for the

air of fiction which he throws around his wrtings, and the high coloring he gives to every thing he describes, and yet, though arrogating the distinction of being one of the learned of the times, he ventures with much caution to illustrate the principles that the earth is spherical in form and that it would be *possible* to circumnavigate it. The spirit of inquiry which his works display, render them interesting, and command a certain degree of respect for his childish absurdities.

From the ideas which are commonly entertained of poetry and prose, nothing appears to be more distinct than these two classes of literature, dividing it as they do, into two grand divisions. But it is difficult to define the exact limits of each; there is no absolute distinction between them unless it be rhyme: both admit a high finish, and are regulated according to certain rules of melody. It is a question whether prose may not be more musical than poetry; it admits of a greater *variety* of melody and observes as certain rules in its construction and the variations of its scale.

That the mechanical execution of prose is more difficult than that of poetry, is inferred from the fact, that the construction of the latter is reduced to definite rules which can be learned in a few hours, and which are applied purely upon mechanical principles. A refined taste and a cultivated ear, as well as an enlarged mind are indispensable to the production of a high order of prose. Prose requires a longer time to mature than poetry; poetry springs up and blossoms and bears fruit the same season, comparatively, whereas, prose requires many. Mandeville and Chaucer, are the Eng-

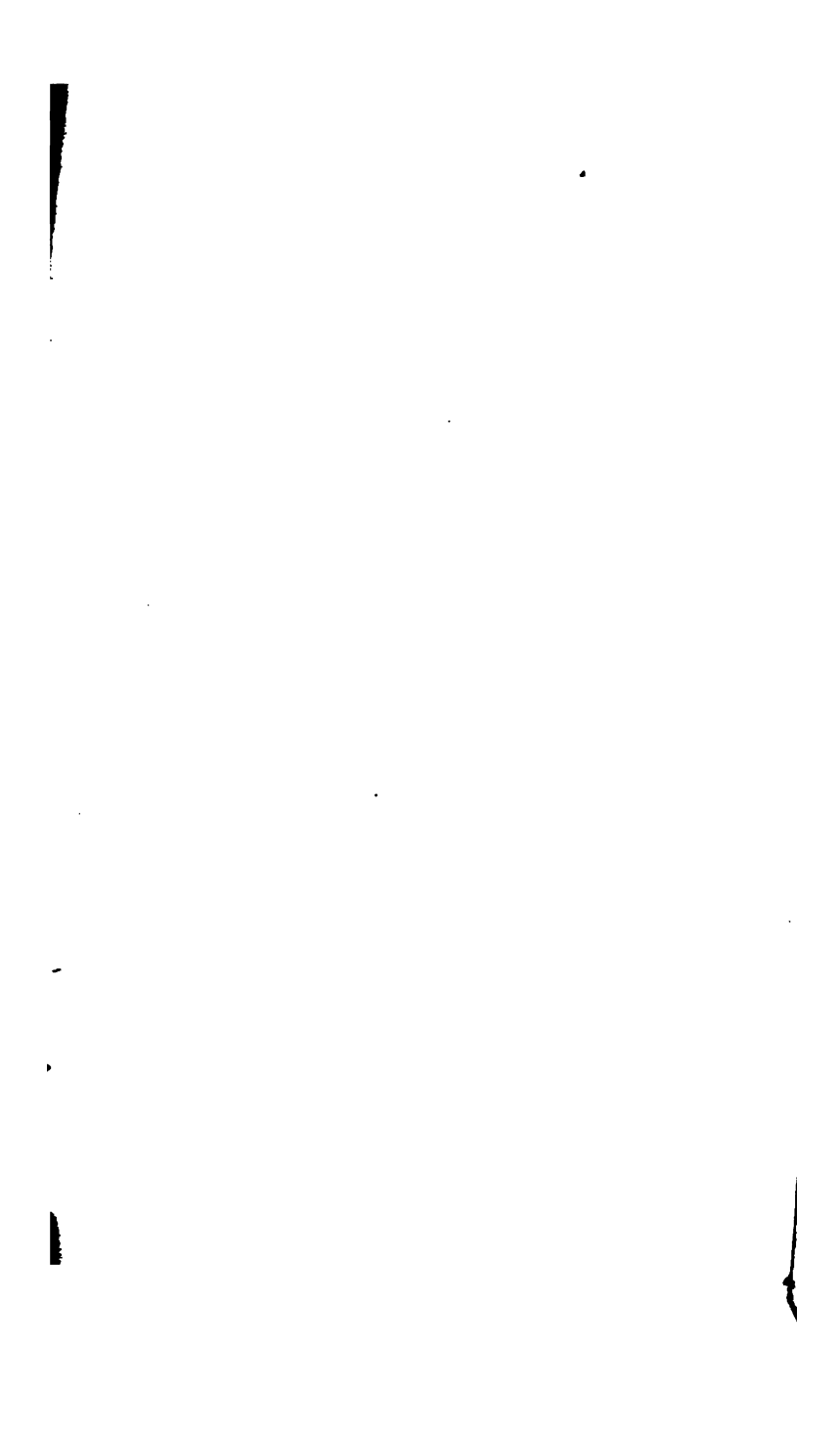
lish fathers of these two species of composition, both appearing in the same age, yet the latter carried his divine art to a high degree of perfection while the former only marked the era of the commencement of his. Both sustain the relation of founder to the language, but Wicliffe shares the honor with Mandeville, in prose, while Chaucer is without an equal in his age.

JOHN WICLIFFE.

Human productions are the creatures of a day, and the interest attached to the best works is generally, of short duration. They scarcely rise into favor when their novelty ceases; neglected and no longer read they are soon forgotten. They embody only the partial knowledge of the times, and that adulterated with error, and are adapted only to particular tastes, and capacities. Language committed to such works, must in a great measure be subject to the same vicissitude. This was one of the great obstacles which our language had to contend with in its early stages. But Wicliffe, in translating the Bible into the English, gave it an element of purity and stability; he thus breathed into it life and immortality.

The Bible is the book of all times, adapted to all tastes and capacities: it is truth without mixture of error; and thus it became the foundation and the rock of support to the language. The waves of time have beat against it, but they have only washed away its Gothic features and displayed the beauty and symmetry of its native, genuine element. As it is the mine of divine knowledge, so to speak, to which every

age has resorted, and will continue to resort to throughout all time; as its precepts are cherished and treasured up in the memory, and as its sacredness guards it against the approaches of innovation: so it will continue to be as it has been, the living fountain whence shall issue the purest streams of the English language.



ENGLISH POETS,
AND
GEMS OF POETRY.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

My maister CHAUCER, with his *fresh* Comedies
Is dead, alas ! chief Poet of Britaine,
That whilom made full piteous Tragedies :
The fall of Princes he did also 'plaine,
As he that was of rhyming sovereign
Whom all this land should of good right prefer,
Since of our Language he was the Load-star.

JOHN LYDGATE,

But welaway ! so is mine hearte woe
That *the honour of English tongue is dead*,
Of whom I counsel had, and help in need.

O, Master deare ! and father reverent,
My inaster CHAUCER, *flower of eloquence* !
Mirror of fruitful wisdom and intent,
O, universal father in science,
Alas ! that thou thine excellent prudence,
In thy bed mortal, mightest not bequeath !
What ailed Death ?—Alas ! why take *thy* breath ?

OCCLEVE.

Courageous Cambel and stout Triamond
With Canance and Cambine link'd in lovely bond.

XXXI.

WHILOM as antique stories tellen us,
Those two were foes the felonest on ground,
And battle made, the dreadest dangerous,
That ever shrilling trumpet did resound :
Though now their acts be nowhere to be found,
As that renowned poet them compiled
With warlike numbers, and herolck sound,
Dan CHAUCER (*well of English undefiled*)
On fame's eternal bead-roll worthy to be filed.

XXXII.

But wicked Time, that all good thoughts doth waste
 And works of noblest wits to nought out-wear,
 That famous Monument bath quite defaced
 And robbed the world of treasure endless dear,
 He which might have enriched all us here.
 O cursed Eld ! the canker-worm of wits ;
 How may these rhymes (so rude as doth appear)
 Hope to endure, *sith works of heavenly wits*
 Are quite devour'd, and brought to nought by little bits.

XXXIII.

Then pardon, O most sacred happy spirit,
 That I thy labors lost may thus revive,
 And steal from thee, the meed of thy due merit,
 That none durst ever while thou was't alive ;
 And being, dead, in vain yet many strive :
 Ne dare I like, but through infusion sweet
 Of thine own spirit (which doth in me survive)
 I follow here the footing of thy feet,
 That with thy meaning so I may the rather meet.

FAIRY QUEEN.—L. 4. Canto 2.

Old CHAUCER, like the morning star,
To us discovers day from far,
 His light those mists and clouds dissolved,
 Which our dark nation long involv'd ;
 But he descending to the shades,
Darkness again the age invades,
 Next (like Aurora) Spenser rose
 Whose purple blush the day foreshows.

DENHAM.

The greatest personage of the fourteenth century, whose name, by the force of his genius, is raised above kings, and transmitted to posterity, is Geoffrey Chaucer, who is hailed as the morning star of English Poetry. The estimation in which he was held attests the influence which he exerted upon his age ; he stamped his own image upon it, and time has not effaced the impress which he gave to it.

In giving form to and refining his native tongue, he made a more permanent and valuable contribution to poetry and general literature than could have been effected in any other way, or by all other means combined. Depth of sentiment, richness of thought, and beautiful imagery, attach *immediate* interest to poetry; but these in their nature are transient, and cannot be perpetuated, while every improvement in the language is equal in its beneficial results to the creation and universal diffusion of the graces of composition, and the beauties of polite learning.

But Chaucer did more than merely to refine the language, he gave to it the characteristic element of its poetry; and as the founder of English heroic; he gave to poetry that peculiar form and cadence which are best suited to the genius of English mind.

Chaucer is an acknowledged *national poet*, and in this respect he has no superior, no equal, in the English language. As the founder of the language and poetry of his country, he stands in the same rank with the illustrious Homer and Dante. Shakspeare does not rival him here: *he* is a prodigy; *he* was not formed from anything that went before him, nor does he seem to be the creature of his own age. He rose above art and gave law to nature, or rather violated the laws of nature and made the transgression honorable by the splendor of his genius. He had no prototype and he left no model that future genius dared to emulate. But Chaucer, in giving form to poetry, and fixing its limits, marked out the path of genius, and assigned the bounds to the national mind.

Chaucer is a poet in the legitimate sense of the term ; he is truly possessed with the wonderful powers of the *divine art* ; although laboring as he did under the embarrassments of an infant and imperfect language, he failed to exhibit its proudest triumphs. Like the unfledged eagle, his flight was but feeble, compared with his native strength ; his eagle-eye gazed at the sun and he was filled with longings to soar aloft in the divine light of imagination, and although he never reached all that he aimed at, he has left abundant evidence of his superior powers.

The changes in the language since his time, have caused his works to be neglected ; but although they have been thus consigned to a partial oblivion, they have nevertheless been the common plunder of modern times. His characters have all been retouched and his scenery all transferred ; but, forsooth, because they have been clothed in different guise and shaded with different colors, they have all been passed off, in a thousand different shapes, as original conceptions. His creations are common property, because they belong to nature.

For invention and happy conception of thought he is second only to Shakspeare. That a number of his pieces are founded on fable, or taken in part from other writers, is no disparagement of their merit considered, even as originals. He has improved upon all that he has borrowed ; and by uniting the various parts in one grand design, he has thrown around the whole an air of originality. He preserves only the great features of his copy, and supplies the rest from his own imagina-

tion. In his comic pieces, he catches from some model a slight hint of his subject, which he varies and embellishes at pleasure, coloring and shading it by his own creative imagination, till the result bears little resemblance to the work which suggested it.

His genius is as signally displayed in giving life to his creations as in the invention and embodiment of his design; he is equally great in the profoundest pathos, and the richest humor. Humor which casts *a broad ray of laughing light* over all our fanciful associations, revealing thoughts which escape observation in more moody moments, and often eliciting truths which had been sought in vain with the greatest avidity; pathos that goes direct to the human heart, leaving all its pulses aching and vibrating through the tenderest chords of the soul.

His comic powers have been rarely surpassed; but pathos and versatility of genius are his great characteristics. He gives us deep glances into the soul of the suffering one, and moves us with compassion or penetrates us with suffering; the woes of years waste the heart and the next moment the flush of triumph overpowers the soul; the spirit languishes and endures the keenest anguish, or rejoices in the highest extacy. The mysterious workings of the mind and heart are displayed with a masterly power, surpassing far his great Italian prototype:

“The bard’s enchanting art
Which whether he attempts to warm the heart
With fabled scenes or charm the ear with rhyme
Breathes all *pathetic*, lovely and sublime.”

JENYNS.

He gave the English language and poetry its first hold upon the heart of Europe ; in his own simple and intensive language,

His English is sweet upon his tongue.

Saxon poetry was distinguished from prose, principally, by its metrical phrase, without the soul and energy of true poetry. The poetry that succeeded him was merely descriptive and historical ; it aspired to nothing higher than to record facts, and did not venture beyond the bounds of the real world. But Chaucer drew from nature, as he drew from the models of art ; he caught from her the materials of his design, but combined and embellished them according to the ideal beauty of his own mind. With the freshness and simplicity of nature, he combined the beauty and perfection of art, and gave to the world, new characters and new imagery. Abandoning the real world, he sung of imaginary heroes and invented characters as well as incidents, but he connected *natural feelings* with these *supposed* situations ; *he fancied as well as felt*, and then the unlimited genius and peculiar nature of our poetry appeared ; and from that hour she has never lost her hold upon the human affections.

He at once established the bounds of English poetry, and gave to it an element of stability, of perpetuity. The poetry of mere fashion and that which depends on style are in their very nature perishable and transient ; but when thought and sentiment were combined, when passion and spirituality were infused into our poetry, it became unchangeable as human nature itself. Fancy cannot bestow immortality ; her forms are always fleeting

and future imaginations may paint her visions in brighter colors, and throw around them a nobler, if not a fresher mien, but when truth and beauty become a passion and are incarnated with the poetry of language, it survives the changes of manners and the lapse of time.

Chaucer's descriptions are vivid; almost every stroke of description, though portrayed in the simplest language, is addressed to the imagination; and every object forms a distinct and lively image in the mind. The representations of his *epic action*, so to speak, are striking pictures which may be painted as well as imagined; the effect of which is to remove the idea of time, and to introduce us into the very place of the action, so that we in a manner commune with the actors themselves, and see and feel all that passes. The colors he used are such as would be struck from the rainbow itself, and his flowers are such as we see only in nature. His garlands of daisies are as white and full of fresh fragrance as if gathered in the loveliest morning of May; his troops of knights and ladies are not less attractive, as they ride forth into the green meadows, in their various attire; nor does the duet of Chanticleer, "sung with sweet accord," with his dame Partlet by his side, excite less pleasurable emotions than their melodious ditties. All of his objects of sight have in them all the wonders of our childhood; his stars and his flowers, his songs, his knights and his ladies have in them *the poetry of youth* as well as the poetry of heaven. "His mirth is youthful, his laughter is that of the best and happiest heart; his grief is wholly mature, and his *bitter salt tears* are identified

with those few that we remember as the bitterest in our lives."

If such praise is justly ascribed to any one, it is due to Chaucer; that his characters are all living beings; they are recognized as persons seen before. Their natural features and familiar expressions engage attention at once; and their smiles, like sunbeams, light up the soul and revive associations of other days, while their well known voices haunt us like the visions of our dreams. Such is the enchantment thrown around us we do not feel that we are amusing ourselves, merely with the ideas of things; we are in reality communing with nature through the medium of a mighty genius.

VERSIFICATION OF CHAUCER.

We have seen that the Saxons had a species of writing which from its form and rythmical arrangement differed materially from their common prose, and was esteemed by themselves as Poetry; but their numbers were not determinate, and they seldom employed Rhyme.

These traces of the divine art, which were dimly seen in the pure Saxon era, began to appear more distinctly after the conquest; the crowd of French versifiers that sprang into existence, and clustered around the Norman's throne, following his train, and crowding his courts, to amuse his attendants and celebrate his praise, made versification abundant upon British soil; and it remained only for some master mind to infuse its spirit, and beauty into our own language.

The mere translators which preceded the time of Chaucer, though they performed an important task, yet they are unimportant when compared to him who is to bring to the task his inventive and embellishing powers. They could not improve the art by introducing any new, or by combining any of the common modes of versification ; and their works were intended for the ear, more than for the mind ; to be recited rather than read, so that they were inclined to be more attentive to their rhymes, than to their numbers, presuming, that the defect, or redundance, of a syllable might be easily concealed in the recitation, especially, when accompanied, as it often was, by some musical instrument.

Chaucer found in his native tongue only four regular meters, the Alexandrine Metre, the long Iambic, the Octosyllabic, and the Stanza of six verses.

The *Alexandrine line*,—consists of not less than twelve syllables, nor more than thirteen ; and is often employed with happy effect to close a period. Mr. Pope, while denouncing it, has in his own example :

“A needless Alexandrine ends the song

That, like a wounded snake drags its slow length along ;”

attested its beauty and fitness for this purpose, though it is too cumbersome to be employed in a long production.

The long Iambic consists of fourteen and fifteen syllables, the cæsure occurring at the eighth syllable. This is doubtless the model upon which the Alexandrine is formed, by retrenching in the first hemistich, two syllables, or one foot.

The Octosyllabic metre is the same as the ancient Iambic of two measures. The Stanza of six verses were nearly the same as this, differing only in the third and fourth verses which were wanting in a syllable. The Octosyllabic metre, however, often varied itself from eight to ten syllables. Chaucer wrote in this more than in any of the foregoing measures, and improved it much. His *House of Fame*, which Mr. Pope has formed into a Temple, and adorned with far different imagery, was written in it.

The species of poetry which has been the greatest honor to the English Muse, is the Heroic, and this Chaucer introduced into the English language. There is no instance of any English poet before him, having used this metre in any order of lines, either couplets or stanzas. He, from a variety of models in two different languages, imbued his mind with their poetical beauties, and at once, infused them into our own; and to appreciate this improvement, and to understand the nature of English Heroic Metre, it is necessary to glance at the capabilities of our tongue to produce melody.

The English, above all other languages, abounds in syllables which may be pronounced long or short, and with the words of one syllable, this may be done at pleasure; and there is no exception to this rule, save in words of three or more syllables, and these are all excluded from verse by their inflexibility.

Melody of language results from succession of *long* and *short* syllables which are agreeable to the ear; it would seem to be difficult therefore to produce it in the

English language by any combination of words : and it is curious to enquire what is the element of English versification ; or what particular principle regulates the quantity, or effects the melody ? The accent is the most important circumstance, and upon this the soul of English poetry turns.

It is upon this ground that the versification of Chaucer is to be vindicated from the attacks that have been made against it. And notwithstanding the changes the language has undergone since his time, and the differences in pronunciation, his verse will stand this test. Chaucer's ear was delicate and correct, and that was his guide. He often strikes out lines which are as perfect and brilliant as any that the genius of Pope, the prince of melody, has elicited.

Compare from *The Knight's Tale*, and the *Rape of the Lock*, acknowledged to be the most perfect specimens of melodious versification in the English language, and the highest beauties of the latter do not surpass some of the former.

The four kinds of lines which enter into English Heroic verse, each possessing peculiar melody, are all exemplified in Chaucer.

These different kinds are determined by the peculiar arrangement and coincidence of the pause, the accent, and the sense ; and each is qualified for a particular purpose.

The first order, where the capital pause occurs after the fourth syllable, immediately succeeding an accent, which produces the most melodious line, and gives to it the most spirited and lively air, is frequently em-

ployed by the great Founder of English Heroic ; and with the best effect.

Ere it was day || as she was wont to do.

CHAUCER.

What dire offence || from amorous causes spring.

POPE.

Again :

This gentle duke || down from his courser strait.

CHAUCER.

Again :

He took his host || and home he rid anon.

ib.

Fair in a field || there as he thought to fight.

ib.

These lines are perfectly melodious in themselves, and detached from their connection, they appear to be the proper vehicles of bold and impetuous thought.

It is sufficient for the present purpose, to show that Chaucer has infused this variety of melody into his verse, without seeking out the laws of each particular kind ; and those who desire it can consult Lord Kames, who, to say the least, is as ingenious as he is subtle. According to his resolution of the question, an accent succeeded by a pause, as in this case, makes a greater impression than where the numbers flow on without any, which becomes monotonous. This accent is distinguished from others even by an ordinary ear. The cause of it is found in the fact that the pause elevates the accent ; and the accenting tone produces in the mind a similar elevation, which continues during the pause ; and the line itself, representing

by its unequal division an ascending series, carries the mind still higher, making an impression similar to that of going upward ; and the mind, roused and elevated, mounts up to the highest scale, the effect of all of which is to bestow on the melody a greater air of animation.

The second order is for example, where the pause falls after the fifth syllable, dividing the line into two equal parts ; these being pronounced with equal effort, are agreeable by their uniformity. In this example the pause is separated from the accent by a short syllable, and the effect is soft and gentle. The short unaccented syllable succeeds one that is accented, which being pronounced with a falling voice, naturally prepares us for a pause. This produces a modulation sensibly sweet, soft, and flowing ; the effect is not so sprightly as in the former case, because a syllable intervenes between it and the pause ; its elevation by the same means vanishes instantaneously ; the mind by a falling voice is prepared for a stop ; and the influence from the division of the line into two equal parts, is calm and sweet.

So when an angel || by divine command.

POPE.

And as an angel || heavenly (*lich*) she sung.

CHAUCER.

Again :

Of her that roameth || in the yonder place.

ib.

Again :

To love my lady || whom I love and serve.

ib.

This order is proper for a sentiment which is tender, delicate, or melancholy, and is adapted to all the sympathetic emotions.

The third kind, where the pause falls after the sixth syllable, dividing the line into two unequal parts, of which the latter is the shorter, contrasts also in its effect with the first order; it appears like a descending series; and the second portion being executed with less stress than the first, the diminished effort produces a tendency to mental rest. Its capital accent coming late, also gives to it an air of gravity and solemnity.

Speed the soft intercourse ¶ from soul to soul.

POPE.

But it were all too long ¶ for to devise.

Again :

And him she carried soft ¶ unto the tent.

CHAUCER.

The fourth order throws the pause after the seventh syllable, and is still more dignified and lofty than the third, which it resembles in the mildness of its accent, and the softness of its pause.

And taught the doubtful battle ¶ where to rage.

POPE.

The fairness of a lady ¶ that I see,
Yond in the garden roaming ¶ to and fro,
Is cause of all my crying ¶ and my wo.

CHAUCER.

Besides these various kinds of verse, where everything is effected by the capital pause, the variety is

still farther extended by the nice and various arrangement of the inferior pauses; and it is these various harmonies which makes the richest music in Chaucer's verse. He is seldom monotonous; and this is the cause of the objections that have been made to his verse. From the variety of modulation exhibited in his lines, it has been doubted whether he was governed at all by the exact rules of versification. But so far as rules which depend upon taste and poetic capability can be applied, he has shown himself a perfect master of them.

The fundamental laws of Heroic verse, that each line must contain ten syllables, of which one must be short, and the other long, in the order of succession, with the exception that a line may commence with a long one, are so simple and easy, that no skill is required in their application above what is employed in the mere computation of number and quantity. These laws a schoolboy can learn in a single lesson. But poetry commences where these laws end, and Chaucer is in his native element when discoursing its sweetest music. The four sorts of lines distinguished by the different positions of the capital pause constitute, as it were, the four chords to his divine instrument, and by the accents and inferior pauses, he attunes it to all the sensibilities of the soul; and to all the varied passions of the human heart; rousing, inflaming, or soothing them at his will. The music of his verse varies from the deep organ tones of the solemn stately measure, to those delicate and buoyant strains which vary, enliven, and refine by their delicate accents,

and minor pauses; thus what is more solemn and melancholy than the heavy flow of these lines?

*Goes | in his chamber roaming || to and fro,
And to himself | complaining || of his wo.*

Again :

*Well | ought I starve | in vain hope || and distress.
Farewell my life, my lust, and all my gladness.*

For briskness and buoyancy take the following :

Was risen | and roamed || in a chamber | on high.

Again :

*And blind he was || as it is often | seen,
A bow | he bare || and | arrows bright and keen.*

Again :

Give | me my love || thou blissful | lady | dear.

Again:

For | joy of this || so loud, | and high | withal.

The varied melody of Chaucer's verse, rising as it often does, by its consonancies, to the most delicate and sweetest harmony, does no greater honor to his genius, than the skillful adaption he makes of it to the sentiment which each particular kind is best calculated to express.

THE CANTERBURY TALES.

Although this work is founded upon the Italian drama, and its various parts written in imitation of the Decameron, it evinces the poet's capacity to design and execute a poem upon a grand scale. The plot—composing the incidents which are unfolded in progress of

the poem—is exceedingly complicated. As many persons with as various characters are brought together as could well be made to unite in one company, and the identity with the peculiarities of each are preserved throughout the whole performance. In addition to the difficulty of sustaining it, arising from the great number of characters to be supported and displayed, their journey, and its incidents are to be described. The design, therefore, affords an ample range for universal genius; there is an opportunity for the exercise of all his master powers. To give the distinctive features and various shades of character and imbue them with reason and sentiment, attests the greatest skill; to connect these with a natural combination of incidents which harmonize in the design and accelerate the action, is the triumph of his inventive power.

THE PROLOGUE.

If the opening is not as brilliant as some, it, nevertheless promises a rich entertainment. By not making the time of commencement on a particular morning, Chaucer has avoided, either by chance or the just decision of his taste, what necessity in modern times has enforced. In this he has dispensed with a difficult performance, to say the least, without the sacrifice of novelty, for most grown up people have seen the sun rise and set most charmingly; it is quite a difficult matter to paint the gorgeous scenery after the portals of the east have been opened, and the world flooded with golden light, and it requires the nicest skill to dispose of the stars, so that they shall

“Shine most lovely at the last.”

But he did not, after all, avoid all interference with the operations of nature ; and as one evidence that his work was built on nature, he commences talking about her. He refreshes the earth with sweet April rains and strows it with flowers ; he inspires the green and tender shoots with the fragrant breath of spring, and *nature stirs all energies and ages*, when the pilgrimage commences.

“ When that sweet April showers with downward shoot *
The drought of March have pierc'd unto the root,
And bathed every vein with liquid power,
Whose virtue rare engendereth the flower ;
When Zephyrus also with his fragrant breath
Inspired hath in every grove and heath
The tender shoots of green, and the young sun ;
Hath in the Ram one half his journey run
And small birds in the trees make melody,
That sleep and dream all night with open eye ;
So nature stirs all energies and ages,
That folks are bent to go on pilgrimages,
And palmers for to wander thro' strange strands,
To sing the holy mass in sundry lands ;
And more espeecially, from each shire's end
Of England, they to Canterbury wend,
The holy blissful martyr for to seek,
Who hath upheld them when that they were weak,

It fell, within that season on a day
In Southwark, at the Tabard as I lay,
Ready to wend upon my pilgrim route
To Canterbury, with a heart devout,
At night was come into that hostelry
Well nine-and-twenty in a company,
Of sundry folk who thus had chanc'd to fall
In fellowship, and pilgrims were they all,

* Reversified by R. H. Horne.

That now to Canterbury town would ride.
 The chambers and the stables they were wide,
 And all of us refreshed, and of the best.

And shortly when the sun was gone to rest,
 So had I spoken with them every one,
 That I was of their fellowship anon,
 And then promise early for to rise
 To take our way there, as we did advise.
 But ne'ertheless, while I have time and space
 Ere that I further in this story pace,
 Methinks it were accordant with good sense
 To tell you the condition and pretence
 Of each of them, so as it seem'd to me;
 And which they were—of what kind, and degree;
 And eke in what array that they were in:
 And at a knight, then, will I first begin.

THE KNIGHT.

He was a worthy man and like all heroes of romance, he is brave and generous; upright and honorable; patriotic and courteous:

He loved chivalry,
 Truth and honor, freedom and courtesy.

He is the most illustrious knight that ever wore an iron mail or bore a trophied lance either in christian or heathen land. And yet he bears his honors meekly: he is wise and humble, kind and courteous:

Though thus at all times honor'd, he was wise,
 And of his port as meek as is a maid.
 He never yet a word discourteous said
 In all his life to any mortal wight:
He was a very perfect, gentle knight.

But for to tell you of his staid array,—
His horse was good, albeit he was gay.
He wore a fustian cassack, short and plain,
All smutch'd with rust from coat of mail, and rain.
For he was late return'd ; and he was sage,
And cared for nought but his good pilgrimage.

THE SQUIRE.

Chaucer takes advantage of the variety of his characters by arranging the serious and the comic in nearly alternate succession ; which arrangement displays them with the greatest effect. The sighing lover follows by the side of the noble knight ; valor is contrasted with love ; the *simple and coy* princess is attended by the sturdy yeoman with his coat and hood of green. From this grouping of characters, in the delineation, a rich vein of humor and irony is made to run through the whole.

His son, a young SQUIRE, with him there I saw ;
A lover and a lusty bachelor ;
With locks, crisp, curl'd as they'd been laid in press :
Of twenty years of age he was, I guess.
He was in stature of the common length,
With wondrous nimbleness, and great of strength :
And he had been in expeditions three
In Flanders, Artois, and in Picardy ;
And borne him well, tho' in so little space
In hope to stand fair in his lady's grace.
Embroidered was he as it were a mead,
All crowded with fresh flowers, white and red.
Singing he was, or fluting all the day :
He was as fresh as is the month of May.
Short was his gown, with sleeves right long and wide

Well could he sit his horse, and fairly ride.
 He could make songs, and letters well endite,
 Joust and eke dance, and portraits paint, and write.
 His amorous ditties nightly filled the vale ;
He slept no more than doth the nightingale.

Courteous he was, modest and serviceable,
 And carved before his father at the table.

THE YEOMAN.

The sturdy yeoman with his nut brown visage and
 giant form, is firm and dauntless ; both by nature and
 habit, by the texture of his body, and the temper of
 his mind he presents us the picture of a man qualified
 both for action and endurance.

A YEOMAN had he ; and no page beside :
 It pleased him, on this journey, thus to ride ;
 And he was clad in coat and hood of green.
 A sheaf of peacock arrows, bright and keen,
 Under his belt he bare full thriftily :
 Well could he dress his tackle yeomanly ;
 His arrows drooped not with feathers low ;
 And in his hand he bare a mighty bow.
 His head was like a nut, with visage brown.
 Of wood-craft all the ways to him were known.
 An arm-brace wore he that was rich and broad,
 And by his side a buckler and a sword ;
 While on the other side a dagger rare
 Well sheathed was hung, and on his breast he bare
 A large St. Christopher of silver sheen.
 A horn he had ; the baldric was of green.
 A forester was he truly, as I guess.

THE PRIORESS.

She is modest, reserved and inaccessible, yet she indulges freely the generous impulses of her nature; cheerful, sprightly, and conscientious, she attests her spiritual life. She possesses a constitution, the very nature of which is a law unto herself, the elements of which law are tenderness, simplicity, and truth. She is delicate without being fastidious; affable without familiarity; and courteous without officiousness.

And of a truth she was of great disport;
Pleasant to all and amiable of port.
It gave her pain to counterfeit the ways
Of court; its stately manner and displays;
And to be held in distant reverence.

Grey eyes and a large forehead were beautiful in Chaucer's day:

Full seemly was her 'kerchief crimp'd across;
Her nose well cut and long; *eyes grey as glass*;
Her mouth was small, and thereto soft and red,
And certainly a *forehead fair she had*:
It was almost a *span in breadth* I trow;
And truly she was not of stature low.

Most proper was her cloak, as I was ware,
Of coral small about her arm she bare
Two strings of beads, bedizen'd all with green,
And thereon hung a broach of gold full sheen,
On which was graven first a crowned A
And after "*Amor vincit omnia.*"

THE MONK.

Chaucer's character of a monk is drawn purely for comical effect, and it agrees with the condition of the

monastic order in its perverted and most degenerate state. The monastic institution had its *origin* in the purest of motives; and it has been of too much service to learning to be too lightly esteemed, how degenerate soever it may have become, or however inconsistently any of its votaries may have conducted at any time, in agreement with the universal tendency of the times, and the prevailing habits of the age. The venerable name of monk has become associated with the idea of fraud as well as ignorance and superstition; but this portrait, which was drawn by the pencil of animosity and fanaticism, is not to be admired as a faithful likeness. There was no venom in Chaucer's heart; he is not a reformer or controversialist, and he dealt with religion and politics as the poet of universal nature is allowed to do in reflecting the image of his times. He possessed a deep religious passion, which, connected as it was with his creative and discursive genius, it brought him into immediate contact, so that he communed with universal nature. He sympathized deeply with humanity in all its various conditions and aspects, and no ill nature is betrayed in any of his attempts to delineate, and by delineating, to correct the abuses of his time.

A Monk there was, of skill and mastery proved;
A bold hand at a leap, who hunting loved;
A manly man, to be an abbot able.
Full many a dainty horse had he in stable,
And when he rode, men might his bridle hear
Gingling in a whistling wind as clear,
And eke as loud, as doth the chapel bell
Where reigned he lord o'er many a holy cell

He is not of the opinion that hunting is unfit for holy men, or that a monk, when out of his cloister, is like a fish out of his element : he is fond of the chase ; he wears the finest furs with the richest gold ; he is as sleek as a lover, and as sturdy as a yeoman.

I saw his large sleeves trimmed above the hand
 With fur, and that the finest of the land ;
 And for to keep his hood beneath his chin,
 He had of beaten gold a curious pin :
 A love-knot at the greater end there was.
 His head was bald, and shone like any glass ;
 And eke his face, as it had been annoint.
 He was a lord full fat, and in good point.
His eyes were deep, and rolling in his head,
 Which steamed as doth a furnace melting lead.
 His boots were supple, his horse right proud to see ;
 Now certainly a prelate fair was he :
He was not pale as a poor pining ghost.
 A fat swan loved he best of any roast.
His palfrey was as brown as is a berry.

THE FRIAR.

Of the remaining characters of the group, the Friar, the Sergeant of the Law, the Doctor, and the Parson, are particularly interesting : their portraits are graphic, and the poet has anticipated another age, or else he has really drawn them from nature, as it would not be very difficult to trace some of their features in living originals.

A FRIAR there was, *a wanton and a merry ;*
 Licensed to beg, *a wondrous solemn man.*
 In all the orders four there's none that can

So much of dalliance wrap in langaage fair.
 Full many a marriage had he brought to bear
 For women young, and paid the cost with sport.
 Unto his order he was rare support.
 Right well beloved in fellowship was he,
 With jolly franklins all, and yeomanry ;
 And eke with women, of each town the flower,
 For in confession he possessed a power
 More than a curate, as himself could state,
 Being of his order a licentiate.
 Full sweetly would he hear confession made ;
 Pleasantly was his absolution said.
 He was an easy man in penance naming,
 And knew that alms fell heavy from light blaming ;
 Since to an order poor when much is given
 It proves the culprit has been rightly shriven ;
 And many a man so hard is of his heart,
 He will not weep, although his soul should smart ;
 Therefore, instead of prayers and groans and tears,
 Men must give money to the poor friars.

* * * * *

And certainly his note was blithe and gay ;
Well could he sing, and on the psaltery play—
 In songs and tales the prize o'er all he bore.

SERGEANT OF THE LAW.

A sergeant of the Law, wise, wary, arch,
 Who oft had gossip'd long in the church porch,
 Was also there full rich of excellence.
 Discreet he was and of great reverence ;
 For such he seemed his words were all so wise.
 Justice he was full often in assize ;
 By patent and commission from the crown,
For his keen science, and his high renown.
 Of fees and robes he many had I ween :

So great a purchaser was no where seen.
 All was fee simple to him in effect;
 His rightful gainings no one could suspect.
 So busy a man as he no circuit has;
And yet he seemed busier than he was,
He had at tip of tongue all cases plain,
With all the judgments since King William's reign.

THE DOCTOR OF PHYSIC.

A Doctor of Physic rode with us along;
 There was none like him in this wide world's throng,
 To speak of physic and of surgery;
For he was grounded in astronomy.
 He very much prolonged his patient's hours
 By natural magic; and the ascendant powers
 Of figures that he cast, his art could make
 Benign of aspect, for his patient's sake.
 He knew the cause of every malady,
 Were it of cold, or hot, or moist or dry,
 And how engender'd—what the humors were—
 He was a perfect practiser.
 The cause once known, and root of the disease,
Anon he placed the sick man at his ease.
 Full ready had he his apothecaries
 To send him drugs and his electuaries,
 And each one made the other sure to win;
 Their friendship was no new thing to begin.
 Well the old Æsculapius he knew,
 And Discorides, and Rufus too;
 Hali, and old Hippocrates, and Galen,
 Serapion, Rasis, and wise Avicen;
 Averroes, Damascene, and Constantin,
 Deep-seeing Bernard, Gatesden, Gilbertin.
 His diet by its nutriment weigh'd he,
 For to be charged with superfluity

In meat and drink, had been to him a libel.
His study was but little in the Bible.

He was clad in crimson and sky-grey,
 With thin silk lined, and lustrous taffeta.
 And yet he was but moderate in expense.

THE PARSON.

A good man of religion did I see,
 And a poor parson of a town was he ;
 But rich he was of holy thought and work.
 He also was a learned man, a clerk,
 And truly would Christ's holy gospel preach,
 And his parishioners devoutly teach.
 Benign he was, and wondrous diligent,
 And patient when adversity was sent ;
 Such had he often proved and loth was he
 To curse for tythes and ransack poverty ;
 But rather would he give, there is no doubt
 Unto his poor parishioners about,
 Of his own substance, and his offerings too.
His wants were humble, and his needs but few.

This great poem forms a living picture of the manners of the poet's age: but of the Tales themselves, a few extracts from one must suffice.

THE SQUIRE'S TALE.

This story is re-versified by Mr. Leigh Hunt, and was particularly admired by Milton, who alludes to it in his *IL. PENSEROSO* :

Or call up him that left half told
 The story of Cambuscan bold,
 Of Camball, and of Algarsife,

And who had Canace to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass,
 On which the Tartar King did ride.

The king of Araby sends to Cambuscan, king of Sarra, a horse and a sword of magic quality, and also to his daughter Canace, a magic glass and a ring. Mr. Urry says, much of this tale is either lost, or else it was never finished by Chaucer.

THE BRASS STEED.

And so befell, that after the third course,
 While that this king sat thus in his array,
 Hearing his minstrels and his harpers play
 Before him at his board deliciously,
 In at the hall-door lo! all suddenly
There came a knight upon a steed of brass,
That in his hand a mirror held of glass ;
Upon his thumb he had a golden ring,
And by his side a naked sword hanging ;
 And up he rideth to the royal board.
In all the hall there was not spoke a word
 For marvel of this knight. Him to behold
 Full busily they waited, young and old.

This strange knight that appeared thus suddenly
 All armed except his head, full gorgeously,
 Saluteth king and queen, and nobles all,
 In order as they sat within the hall,
With so high reverence and regardfulness,
 Both in his word, and in his whole address
 That Gawain's self, with his old courtesy,
Had left Fairy-Land, and stood thereby,
 Had not improv'd him in a single thing :

And after this, straight looking at the king,
 His message with a manly voice he spoke,
 After the form belonging to his folk,
 With not a fault of syllable or letter ;
 And that his meaning might be felt the better
 His cheer was suited to his words ; *as teach*
Those learned wits, that ken the art of speech,
 I may not tell it as he did : *my strain*
Is far too weak such rhetoric to attain.
 Yet to repeat it, in a common way,
 As shewing what at large he *meant* to say,
 Thus much will I attempt to call to mind :

“ My lord the king of Araby and Ind,
 My sovereign master, on this solemn day
 Saluteth you, as he best can and may,
 And sendeth you in honor of your feast
 By me, your ready servant, though your least,
This steed of brass ; which well, as in this hall,
 Can in the space of a day natural,
 That is to say, in four-and-twenty hours,
 Where'er you list, in sunshine or in showers,
 Carry your body into every place
 In which it please you shew your sovereign face,
 Nor stain you with a speck, through foul or fair ;
Or if you list to sail as high in air
 As doth an eagle, when he wills to soar,
 This same good steed shall bear you evermore
 Without a peril, (though you take no keep
 Of bridle as ye go ; nay sit and sleep ;)
Then turn again with writhing of a pin.
 He, Sir, that made it, knew all arts herein,
 And waited upon many a constellation,
 While patiently he worked his operation,
 And knew full many a seal, and many a bond.

THE MAGIC GLASS.

"This glass I hold, clear as a diamond,
Hath such a power, that in it men may see
When there shall happen any adversity
Unto your reign, or to yourself; and know,
By very sight, who is your friend or foe;
And more than this, if any lady bright
Have set her heart on any thankless knight
And he be false, *here shall the lady see*
His new love, and his thorough subtlety,
So plain and clear, that nothing he shall hide."

THE RING.

"Wherefore against this lusty summer-tide,
This glass, and this ring also, my lord, he
Hath sent unto my lady Canace,
Your excellent daughter that is here;—a thing
So virtuous, this simple-seeming ring,
That let her bear it, either on her hand,
Or in her purse, and she shall understand
The tongue and *speech of every fowl that flies*,
And answer him in his own birdly wise.
Also each herb that groweth shall she read,
And whom it may avail, though that he bleed
From dreadful wounds, never so deep and wide."

THE SWORD:

"This naked sword that hangeth by my side
Such virtue hath, that whomsoe'er it smite,
Clean through his armor *will it carve and bite*,
Were it as thick as is a branched oak;
And whosoever is wounded with the stroke,
Shall never be whole man, till of your grace

It please you stroke him in the wounded place
With the flat side. The wound will then be closed.
All this is truth, Sir ; nothing have I glozed.
Nor while 'tis held in hand, will the sword fail."

The knight having told his tale, alighting doffs his armor for a vest, and takes a seat as an honored guest, leaving the steed, *which shone like the sun*, standing in the court to the admiration and astonishment of the lords and ladies. He is governed by the *trilling* of a pin :

This horse anon began to trip and dance,
Soon as the knight laid hand upon the rein,
Who said, " There is no more, Sir, to explain,
Or bear in mind when we two speak alone ;
Than trill a pin here, as shall then be shown ;
Yet also you must name your journey's end ;
Likewise must bid him when you please, descend,
And trill another pin, and then will he
Go down where'er you please full easily,
And rest, whate'er betide him, in the spot,
Though all the world be sworn that he shall not.
Trill yet this other pin, and in a wink
Vanish will he, whither, no soul may think ;
And yet return, *be it by day or night,*
The moment he is call'd, *as swift as light*
Ride where you list, there's no more need be done."

When thus the king his lesson had begun,
And furthermore, when whispering with the knight,
He knew the thing and its whole form aright,
Full glad was he ; then turning with his train
Repaired him to his mirth yet once again.
The bridle to a tow'r is borne, and there
Laid up among the jewels, rich and rare ;

*The horse has vanish'd, I may not tell how ;
 And I myself awhile must vanish now,
 Leaving this Cambuscan, this noble king,
 Feasting his lords till day was nigh to spring.*

THE FALCON'S COMPLAINT.

Though male and female animals in general were accustomed to speak of one another as men and women in the pictures of former days, yet it is perhaps to be gathered, from the length to which this license is carried in the one before us—especially in the remarkable and sorrowful use of the simile about the bird—that the falcon was a human being, in a temporary state of metamorphosis ;—a circumstance very common in tales of the East. LEIGH HUNT.

*"Well was I born," quoth she ; "alas the day !
 And foster'd in a rock of marble grey
 So tenderly that nothing ail'd me long ;
 I knew not what misfortune was, nor wrong,
 Till I could flee, under the heavens full high.*

*"There dwelt a tiercelet in the place, hard by,
 Who seem'd a well of very crystal truth,
 All were he deep in every fault of youth.
 He wrapped it all so close in humble cheer,
 And had a way so purely sweet and clear,
 And was so pleasant, and so busy kind,
 No traitor could have guess'd his traitorous mind.
 Full deep in grain he dyed his pleasing powers ;
 Yea, as the serpent hideth under flowers
 Till such time as the bite proclaimeth it,
 Right so this god of love's own hypocrite
 Put forth all sweets that make the shows of love :
 And as on tombstones all is fair above,
 But under is the corpse, such as ye wot.
 Such was this hypocrite, so fair, yet not ;
 And in this wise he fashioned his intent,
 That, save the fiend, none dreamed of what he meant,
 And serv'd, and wept, and plain'd, and spoke of death,*

Till that my heart, *too soft beneath such breath*,
 Gave him its love in very thanks for his,
 Not knowing how enough to pay such bliss.
 And when he found his triumph gone so far,
And that my star had bow'd beneath his star,
 He cared no more, although no more he won,
 But left me with a foolish heart undone,
 And set his wits to gain as much elsewhere,
 This being all his love and all his care.

“His happy manner *was a heaven to see*
To any woman ; and so charmed it me,
 And I so loved him, *and so watched his eyes*
For any look that might therein arise
 That did he suffer the least bit on earth,
Fell there a speck of shadow on his mirth,
 A pang so keen into my breast would shoot,
 Methought I felt death twisting mine heart's root.

“In this poem,” says Mr. Warton, “the nature of those studies (the Arabian) is displayed, and their operations exemplified : and in this consideration, added to the circumstances of Tartary being the scene of action, and Arabia the country from which these extraordinary presents are brought, induces me to believe this story to be one of the many fables which the Arabians imported into Europe. At least, it is formed on their principles. Their sciences were tinged with the warmth of their imaginations, and consisted in wonderful discoveries and mysterious inventions. This idea of a *horse of brass* took its rise from their chemical knowledge and experiments in metals.” * * * * “We must add, that Astronomy, which the Arabian philosophers studied with a singu-

lar enthusiasm, had no small share in the composition of this *miraculous steed*. For says the poet,

He that it wrought,—
He waited many a constellation,
Ere he had done the operation."

With regard to some points of dispute, which the Squire's Tale involves, we will cite Mr. Hunt against Mr. Hobbes.

"Chaucer's steed of brass," says Mr. Hunt, "that was

So horsly and so quick of eye,

is copied from the life. You might pat him, and feel his brazen muscles. Hobbes, in objecting to what he thought childish, made a childish mistake. His criticism is just such as a boy might pique himself upon, who was educated on mechanical principles, and thought he had outgrown his Goody Two Shoes. With a wonderful dimness of discernment in poetic matters, considering his acuteness in others, he fancies he has settled the question by pronouncing such creations 'impossible!' To the brazier they are impossible, no doubt: but not to the poet. Their possibility, if the poet wills it, is to be conceded; the problem is, the creature being given, how to square its actions with probability, according to the nature assumed of it. Hobbes did not see that the skill and beauty of these fictions lay in bringing them within those very regions of truth and likelihood, in which he thought they could not exist. Hence the serpent Python of Chaucer,

Sleeping against the sun upon a day,

when Apollo slew him. Hence the chariot-drawing dolphins of Spenser, softly swimming along the shore lest they should hurt themselves against the stones and gravel. Hence Shakspeare's Ariel, living under blossoms, and riding at evening on the bat."

This passage is quoted at length, because it is a fair specimen of this popular critic. In this passage, as throughout his work entitled "Imagination and Fancy," he has evinced the predominance, in his own mind, of the latter faculty, "Fancy." In agreement with his own comparison, he is more like a child in a flower-garden, than a botanist at his herbarium.

According to the same writer, the whole science of versification is a "musical secret," so that Beethovens or Paisiellos are the only real poets; or at least that this "secret" is not attainable to any vital effect, "save by the ear of genius."

"*Variety* of versification," he says, "consists in whatsoever can be done for the prevention of monotony, by diversity of stops and cadences, distribution of emphasis, and retardation and acceleration of time; for the whole real secret of versification is a musical secret, and is not attainable to any vital effect, save by the ear of genius. All the mere knowledge of feet and numbers, of accent and quantity, will no more impart it, than a knowledge of the 'Guide to Music' will make a Beethoven or a Paisiello. *It is matter of sensibility and imagination; of the beautiful in poetical passion, accompanied by musical; of the imperative necessity for a pause here, and a cadence there, and a quicker or slower utterance in this*

or that place, created by analogies of sound with sense, by the fluctuations of feeling, by the demands of the gods and graces that visit the poet's harp, as the winds visit that of Æolus."

"Chaucer," says Mr. Southey, "is not merely the father of English poetry, he is also one of our greatest poets. His proper station is in the first class with Spenser, and Shakspeare, and Milton; and Shakspeare alone has equalled him in variety and versatility of genius."

We will close this list of opinions with quotations from Mr. Campbell and Mr. Warton. The same intelligent writer, Mr. Tyrwhitt, while he vindicates Chaucer from the imputation of leaving English more full of French than he found it, considers it impossible to ascertain, with any degree of certainty, the exact changes which he produced upon the national style, as we have neither a regular series of authors preceding him, nor authentic copies of the work nor assurance that they were held as standards by their contemporaries. In spite of this difficulty, Mr. Ellis ventures to consider Chaucer as distinguished from his predecessors by his fondness for an Italian inflexion of words, and by his imitating the characteristics of the poetry of that nation.

"He has a double claim to rank as the founder of English poetry, from having been the first to make it the vehicle of spirited representations of life and native manners, and from having been the first great architect of our versification, in giving our language the ten syllable, or heroic measure, which though it may sometimes be found among the lines of more

ancient versifiers, evidently comes in only by accident."—*Campbell's British Poets*.

"Enough has been said to prove, that in elevation and elegance, in harmony and perspicuity of versification, he surpassed his predecessors in an infinite proportion; that his genius was universal, and adapted to the themes of unbounded variety; that his merit was not less in painting familiar manners with humor and propriety, than in moving the passions, and in representing the beautiful or the grand objects of nature with grace and sublimity; in a word, that he appeared with all the lustre and dignity of a true poet, in an age which compelled him to struggle with a barbarous language, and a national want of taste; and when to write verses at all, was regarded as a singular qualification."—*Thomas Warton's History of English Poetry*.

LYDGATE, GOWER, CAXTON, SURREY AND GASCOIGNE.



Chaucer in English literature, is signalized above all other men ; against the times which precede him he stands out, by the light that his genius sheds around him, as a beacon, evincing that the greatest perils in the progress of learning are past. The luster that he sheds upon his age, proclaims the reunion of the pure intellect and the imagination, of taste and judgment, of the solid sciences and the fine arts. To the times that immediately succeed him, he is equally conspicuous ; he raised learning to such a pitch of glory that it relapsed as soon as he ceased to act on it. Thus viewed in either direction, he forms a point of light in English literature, of which he is signalized as the "*glory and the light.*"

More than a century elapsed without producing a single name nearly as illustrious as his, in polite learning. Gower, his friend and contemporary, labored successfully with him in imparting ideas drawn from

other languages, and in reforming and establishing the idiom of his native tongue. He drew as Chaucer did, to some degree, from the French and Italian, and added something of elegance and cultivation, to Chaucer's original Saxon spirit. But he betrays in all his writings the airs of the moralist and the scholar. His language is perspicuous, his versification is not destitute of harmony, and he is always grave and sententious ; indeed, he is so serious and didactic on all occasions, that his friend terms him the *moral* Gower. Instead of making his lovers talk of flowers and moonlight ; instead of leading them into enchanted bowers, or by the banks of beautiful rivers, he takes them through the whole circle of Aristotelic philosophy, and develops to them the principles of the Hermetic Science !

In his time, the reputation of learning conferred the highest honors, and he was more ambitious to be thought a scholar than a poet ; he sacrificed his native powers of invention to the display of extensive reading and profound erudition. In these times, the uneducated minstrels alone, who poured forth their divine lays from an overflowing soul, exhibit the real strokes of passion and imagination. Chaucer, though learned, belongs to this class, for his native powers were too strong to be suppressed by habit, and his genius triumphs over his learning. This is an admirable illustration of the force of genius ; superior to the circumstances of the time, to the common ties which bind the mass of mankind to earth, and bursting the bonds of position and education, it rises above them all, and

soars in the direction dictated by the instincts of his own spirit.

In tracing the origin and progress of the language, we looked forward to Chaucer as a star whose light shone cheerfully over the darker ages, and it is with reluctance now that we leave him.

Those who succeed him, incapable of supporting the vigor of his versification, or of sustaining the flight of his fancy, seem rather to relapse into barbarism again. So far from improving upon him, they are incapable even of imitating the beauties which his taste and imagination disclosed.

John Lydgate is inferior to him in versatility of genius and harmony of versification, yet he amplified our language, taught the art of versification, and diffused a taste for the elegancies of composition—combining the qualifications of a theologian, an astronomer, a geometrician, a rhetorician and a poet, he opened a school in a monastery, and with philology as his professed object, became a distinguished proficient in polite letters.

Without any sacrifice to perspicuity he approached true beauty of style; he aided in giving solidity to the English idiom; and in his own beautiful language,

Like as the dew descendeth on the rose
With silver drops,

so genial was his influence upon our literature.

He has some facility of delineation, and combines a copious diction with a variety of poetical phrase-

ology: his description is admired for its delicate touches of fancy.

"I pretend not," says Gray, "to set him on a level with Chaucer, but he certainly comes nearest to him of any contemporary writer I am acquainted with. His choice of expression, and the smoothness of his verse, far surpass both Gower and Occleve. He wanted not art in raising the more tender emotions of the mind."

THE BOWER.

Till at the last, among the bower's glade
Of adventure, I caught a pleasant shade;
Full smoothe and plain, and lovely for to seene,
And soft as velvet was the young greene:
Where from my horse I did alight as fast,
And on a bough aloft his reins cast,
So faint and full of weariness I was,
That I me laid adown upon the grass,
Upon a brink, shortly for to tell
Beside *a river of a crystal well;*
And the water as I rehearse, can,
Like quicksilver in his streams ran,
Of which the gravel and the bright stone
As any gold against the sun shone.

Caxton, the celebrated printer, who enriched the English language with many valuable publications drawn from the French and the Latin, and also from vernacular writers, thus giving an impulse to learning by diffusing it abroad, is reputed to have been also a poet. The work, however, upon which his friends found his reputation as a poet, is by others attributed to Lydgate, thereby "*filching from him his good*

name," and at once depriving him of the honor of an allegorical fiction, concerning the courts of the castle of *Sapience*, containing systems of natural philosophy, logic, rhetoric, and astronomy, with other like topics, but destitute of a particle of imagination: so at the best, his questionable fame as a poet, is lost in the sure luster of his name as the introducer of printing into England.

Printing facilitates the access of literature, but it cannot advance it or prevent its decline; it only multiplies its forms without affecting its intrinsic merit. It diffuses knowledge, but cannot add to or improve it.

Caxton, in his issues from the press, evinced a preference for the English, and thus he sowed widespread the seeds of our vernacular literature. The spirit of reformation was every where diffused through the press; and that, together with the growing taste for a new literature, gave an impulse to the human mind; until about the close of the fifteenth century the fabrics of scholastic literature and religion fell together, and the triumph of truth and learning remained no longer problematical.

These convulsions were at first unpropitious to the repose so desirable for study and science; but when the fanaticisms of honest but misguided zealots subsided, and the liberal genius of Protestantism began to exert itself; every species of elegant and useful knowledge recovered its strength, and arose with increased vigor. Learning was no longer confined to the monastery; nor was the time of the learned exhausted in frivolous speculations; the mind eagerly

embraced those pursuits from which it had long been restrained; and society soon obtained that state of general improvement, and conceived that regard for intellectual life, which have never ceased to be cherished since.

Surrey was one of the first writers of love-verses in the language, and is esteemed the first classical poet. The lover and the scholar are united in him: his eyes are as often

——“Cast up into the maiden’s tower,”

as into the book of knowledge, and he as often speaks in praise of his love as of his learning.

He wrote but little, yet he had a great influence upon the literature of his country. “Surrey,” says Mr. Southey, “was the first English poet who wrote metrically; and the first who used blank verse,—that verse which, for its peculiar and excellent adaptation to the English language, ought to be called the English measure. He wrote also the first English sonnets; and he used the ternal rhyme of Dante,—a meter, by its solemn continuity, so suited to grave subjects, that some poet will surely one day make for himself a lasting reputation by worthily employing it.”

A PRAISE OF HIS LOVE.

Give place ye lovers, here before
That spent your boasts and brags in vaine;
My ladie’s beauty passeth more
The best of yours, I dare will sayne,
Than doth the sun the candle light,
Or brightest day the darkest night.

And thereto hath a troth as just
As had Penolope the fair :
For what she saith, ye may it trust
As it by writing sealed were :
And virtues had she many more
Than I with pen have skill to show.

I could rehearse, if that I would
The whole effect of *Nature's* plaint,
When she had lost the perfect mould,
The like to whom she could not paint.
With wringing hands how she did cry!
And what she said, I know it, I.

I know she swore with raging mind,
Her kingdom only set apart,
There was no loss, by law of kind
That could have gone so near her heart :
And this was chiefly all her pain,
She could not make the like again.

He broke the bondage of rhyme, and gave the first example of English blank verse. He clothed a part of the *Æneid* in an English dress, and with great fidelity to the sense, preserved much of the beauty of Virgil,—the description of Dido's passion, and of the city, revive an association of school-boy days.

And when they were all gone,
And the dim moon doth oft withhold the light ;
And sliding stars provoking unto sleep,
Alone she mourns within her palace void,
And sits her down on her forsaken bed ;
And absent him, she hears when he is gone,
And seeth eke. Oft in her lap she holds
Ascanius, trapt by his father's form.

So to beguile the love cannot be told !
 The turrets now arise not, erst before :
 Neither the youth well armed, nor they advance
 The gates, nor other mete defence for war.
 Broken there hang the works, and mighty frames
 Of walls high raised threatening the sky.

THE FRAILTY OF BEAUTY.

Brittle beauty, that nature made so frail,
 These of the gift is small, and short the season ;
 Flowering to-day, to-morrow apt to fail :
 Fickle treasure, abhorred of reason :
 Dangerous to deal with, vain, of none avail ;
 Costly in keeping, past not worth two *peason* ;
 Slippery and sliding as is an eel's tail :
 Hard to attain, once gotten, not *geason* :
 I ween of jeopardy that peril doth assail ;
 False and untrue, enticed oft to treason ;
 Enemy to youth, that most may, I bewail :
 Ah, bitter sweet, infecting as the poison.
 Thou fairest as fruit that with the frost is taken,
 To-day rudely ripe, to-morrow all to shaken.

Nature, even in the most savage ages, teaches elegance to the lover ; but Surrey has given to his muse a classic grace, and has contributed something to the advancement of learning in his justness of thought, his purity of diction, and correctness of style.

Gascoigne was one of the earliest English dramatic writers and possessed much versatility of talent. He wrote a variety of versification.

GASCOIGNE'S GOOD MORROW.

You that have spent the silent night,
 In sleep and quiet rest,

And joy to see the cheerful light
That riseth in the east ;
Now clear your voice, now cheer your heart,
Come help me now to sing ;
Each willing wight come bear a part
To praise the heavenly King.

And you, whom care in prison keeps,
Or sickness doth suppress,
Or secret sorrow breaks your sleeps,
Or dolorous do distress :
Yet bear a part in doleful wise,
Yea think it good accord,
And acceptable sacrifice,
Each sprite to praise the Lord.

The dreadful night with darksomeness
Had overspread the light,
And sluggish sleep with drowsiness
Had overspread our might :
A glass wherein you may behold,
Each storm that stops our breath,
Our bed the grave, our clothes like mould,
And sleep like dreadful death.

*Yet as this deadly night did last
But for a little space,
And heavenly day, now night is past
Doth shew his pleasant face,
So must we hope to see God's face
At last in heaven on high,
Where we have changed this mortal place
For immortality.*

And of such hopes and heavenly joys,
As then we hope to hold,
All earthly sights and worldly toys

Are tokens to behold.
The day is like the day of doom,
The sun, the Son of man,
The skies, the heavens, the earth, the tomb,
Wherein we rest till then.

The rainbow bending in the sky
Bedecked with sundry hues,
Is like the seat of God on high,
And seems to tell these news ;
That as thereby he promised
To drown the world no more,
So by the blood that Christ hath shed,
He will our health restore.

The misty clouds that fall sometime
And overcast the skies,
Are like to troubles of our time
Which do but dim our eyes :
But as such dews are dried up quite
When Phœbus shews his face,
So are such fancies put to flight
Where God doth guide by gracc.

* * * * *

The little birds which sing so sweet
Are like the angels' voice,
Which render God his praises meet,
And teach us to rejoice :
And as they more esteem that mirth
Than dread the night's annoy,
So much we deem our days on earth
But hell to heavenly joy.

SWIFTNESS OF TIME.

The heavens on high perpetually do more ;
By minutes meal the hour doth steal away,

By hours the days, by days the months remove,
 And then by months the years as fast decay :
 Yea, Virgil's verse and Tully's truth to say,
 That time flieth, *and never claps her wings ;*
But rides on clouds, and forward still she flings.

THE LOVER'S ARRAIGNMENT.

At Beauty's bar as I did stand,
When false Suspect accused me,
 George, quoth the judge, hold up thy hand,
Thou art arraigned of flattery ;
 Tell therefore how thou wilt be tried,
 Whose judgment here wilt thou abide ?

My lord, quoth I, this lady here
 Whom I esteem above the rest
 Doth know my guilt, if any were ;
 Wherefore her doom shall please me best ;
 Let her be judge and juror both,
 To try me guiltless by mine oath.

Quoth *Beauty*, no, it fitteth not,
 A prince herself to judge the cause ;
Will is our justice, well ye wot,
 Appointed to discuss our laws ;
 If you will guiltless seem to go,
 God and your country quit you so.

Then *Craft*, the crier, call'd a quest
Of whom was falsehood foremost fere,
 A pack of pick-thanks were the rest,
 Which came false witness for to bear ;
 The jury such, the judge unjust
 Sentence was said, "*I should be truss'd.*" :

Jealous the gaoler bound me fast
 To hear the verdict of the bill ;

George, quoth the judge, now thou art cast,
Thou must go hence to *Heavy Hill*,
And there be hang'd all by the head ;
God rest thy soul when thou art dead !

Down fell I then upon my knees
All flat *before dame Beauty's face*,
And cried, good lady, pardon me !
Who here appeal unto your grace ;
You know if I have been untrue,
It was in too much praising you.

And though this judge doth make such haste
To shed with shame my guiltless blood
Yet let your pity first be plac'd
To save the man that meant you good ;
So shall you show yourself a queen,
And I may be your servant seen.

Quoth *Beauty*, well ; because I guess
What thou dost mean henceforth to be,
Although thy faults deserve no less
Than justice here hath judg'd to thee,
Wilt thou be bound to stint all strife,
And be true prisoner all thy life ?

Yea, madam, quoth I, that I shall
Lo, *Faith and Truth my sureties* :
Why then, quoth she, come when I call,
I ask no better warrantees.
Thus am I Beauty's bounden thrall,
At her command when she doth call.

HARRINGTON.

His love verses have an elegance and terseness, more modern, by an hundred years, than those of his contemporaries. CAMPBELL.

VERSES OF A STONY-HEARTED MAIDEN WHO BEGUILLED THE
NOBLE KNIGHT, MY FRIEND.

Why didst thou raise such woeful wail,
And waste in briny tears, thy days ?
'Cause she that wont to flout and rail,
At last gave proof of woman's ways ;
She did, in sooth, display the heart
That might have wrought thee greater smart.

Why, thank her then, not weep or moan ;
Let others guard their careless heart,
And praise the day that thus made known
The faithless hold on woman's art ;
Their lips can gloze, and gain such root,
That gentle youth hath hope of fruit.

*But, ere the blossom fair doth rise,
To shoot its sweetness o'er the taste,
Creepeth disdain in canker-wise,
And chilling scorn the fruit doth blast :
There is no hope of all our toil ;
There is no fruit from such a soil.*

Give o'er thy plaint, the danger's o'er
She might have poison'd all thy life ;
Such wayward mind hath bred thee more
Of sorrow had she proved thy wife :
Leave her to meet all hopeless meed,
And bless thyself that so art freed.

No youth shall sue such one to win
Unmark'd by all the shining fair,

Save for her pride and scorn, such sin
As heart of love can never bear ;
Like leafless plant in blasted shade,
So liveth she—a barren maid.

SONNET ON ISABELLA MARKHAM.

*When I first thought her fair, as she stood at the Princess' window, in
goodly attire, and talked to divers in the court-yard.*

Whence comes my love ? O heart, disclose ;
*It was from cheeks that sham'd the rose,
From lips that spoil the ruby's praise,
From eyes that mock the diamond's blaze :*
Whence comes my woe ? as freely own :
Ah me ! *'twas from a heart like stone.*

The blushing cheek speaks modest mind,
The lips befitting words most kind,
The eye does tempt to love's desire
And seems to say "'tis Cupid's fire ;"
Yet all so fair but speak my moan,
Sith nought doth say the heart of stone.

Why thus, my love, so kind, bespeak
Sweet eye, sweet lip, sweet blushing cheek—
Yet not a heart to save my pain ;
O Venus take thy gifts again ;
Make not so fair to cause our moan,
Or make a heart that's like our own.

EDMUND SPENSER.

Next, like Aurora, Spenser rose,
Whose purple blush the day foreshows.

DENHAM.

If Music and sweet Poetry agree,
As they must needs, the sister and the brother,
Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me,
Because thou lov'st the one, and I the other.
DOWLAND to thee is dear, *whose heavenly touch*
Upon the lute doth ravish human sense :
SPENSER, to me, whose deep conceit is such
As, passing all conceit, needs no defense :
Thou lov'st to hear the sweet melodious sound
That Phœbus' lute, the Queen of Music, makes ;
And I in deep delight am chiefly drown'd,
When as himself to singing he betakes.
One god is god of both, as poets feign,
(One knight loves both, *and both in thee remain.*)

From Shakspeare's passionate Pilgrim.

But let no rebel satyr dare traduce
The eternal legends of thy fairy muse,
Renowned SPENSER ! whom no earthly wight
Dares once to emulate, much less despise,
Ballust of France and Tuscan Ariost,
Yield up the laurel garland ye have lost !

HALL.

SPENSER will stand alone, without a class, and without a rival.

WARTON.

We have now attained that stage in the progress of
the language, which is termed the GOLDEN AGE of

English Poetry. This is signalized above all others, in the history of English literature, as a **POETICAL AGE**; as an age "propitious to the operations of original and true poetry, when the coyness of fancy was not always proof against the approaches of reason, when genius was rather directed than governed by judgment, and when taste and learning had so far only disciplined imagination, as to suffer its excess to pass without censure or control, for the sake of the beauties to which they were allied." Taste and reason, the creative and the critical faculties, had attained the states, and sustained such relations to one another as were most propitious to the production of pure poetry.

This age is characterized too, for the abundance, as well as the element of its poetry: during the single reign of Elizabeth, more poetry was produced than all that had been written in the English language, previous to this time. A race of vigorous, independent thinkers arose; the materials of fiction were abundant, and all the causes now existed which were calculated to call forth genius and exercise the imagination.

The customs and institutions of the middle ages had not yet ceased to exercise an influence. The pageants, the ceremonies and processions of those ages that were friendly to imagery, were still perpetuated; romance engendered by gothic devotion did not at once depart. The Catholic worship, in its picturesque appendages and poetic associations, so disposed the mind to love deception that it engendered every species of credulity; its visions, legends and miracles propagated a propen-

sity for the marvelous, confirming the belief in specters and incantations; and these illusions, heightened by the capricious heroism of baronial manners, and the genius of the feudal policy, formed the rich materials for the minstrel's muse, upon which Spenser so greatly improved, reflecting its departing glories in his *Fairy Queen*.

Thus Spenser lived in the most poetic age of English literature, and he has proved himself worthy of his nativity. The spirit of personification and allegory which he has carried to excess, "needs no defense:" it is attributable to the times in which he lived. Fancy, fable and fiction; a prevailing taste for pathetic events and romantic adventures, form the prominent features in the facts, the doings, as well as the poetry of these times.

The causes of this characteristic distinction, are found in the blending of all the various elements of romance, operating as they did, under the rising influence of taste and learning. The mind, just roused from the lethargy of the middle ages, was buoyant and elastic with new life, but the reformation had not yet destroyed every delusion, nor broken the enchantments of superstitious credulity. Every specter did not vanish immediately in the morning beams of science; a few spirits lingered still, and haunted the enchanted ground: some of the rugged features of gothic romance were softened, and some illusions had vanished, but credulity was consecrated by the *name* of science, and men still easily believed that spirits yet hovered around, who brought with them

'Airs from heaven or blasts from hell.'

The alchemist and astrologer yet held their pretended intercourse with supernatural beings, who were obsequious to their call ; they pretended to evoke the queen of Fairies in the solitude of the gloomy grove, where preceded by the murmur of the winds and the rustling of the leaves, she appeared with winning smiles, and in robes of transcendent luster.

Gothic romance was thus softened and blended with classic fiction ; the complicated machineries of giants, dragons, and enchanted castles, were now employed by the epic muse, and the fertility of genius was displayed in the management of ærial beings and imaginary characters. These ideal personages exercised and quickened the creative faculty which had given them birth, and reflected back what poetry had first bestowed.

Taste and criticism had not yet risen and laid down the canons of composition, and genius was not awed with the fear of arraignment before their tribunal. The poet and the minstrel's art were again united : musical studies formed a part of general education, and a flowing and musical modulation was infused into poetry.

Such was the position of Spenser, who surpassed all the poets that preceded him, in fancy and invention, and in the music of his verse.

His poetry is a pure creature of the imagination ; independent of time and space, he transports us into an ideal world, where the most perfect forms of grace and beauty are conceived, and charms and visions control the action of natural laws. While in his

enchanted realms, "we walk a new earth, beneath new heavens, which are lit up with a light that never was on sea or land," and we hear such music as was never heard before by mortal ear.

Spenser possesses supreme dominion over the world of fiction; none but his imagination could throw such beauty and vitality into his misty moral type. He catches the elements of all forms, and possesses the power of combining them, and of re-producing the modifications of his mind; and he is capable of attaching them to such objects as are suitable to constitute the most perfect beauty, or *deformity*.

He aids truth in the embellishment of nature: he renders nature more touching, more pathetic, more pleasing, by adorning the object he portrays with all those beauties which can be properly associated with it. It is true indeed, that his creations are mostly ideal beings; nevertheless, they move us with such a delightful enchantment, that the illusions are forgiven on account of the pleasure they have bestowed.

He aims at spirituality, the embodiment of what does not properly fall under the cognizance of the senses: the obscure and abstract are made palpable, and organization and vitality are given to the images of the mind; and in the incarnation of these shadowy creations, the fertility of his genius is happily displayed.

He possesses a luxuriant imagination, with rare descriptive powers, but is wanting in a profound knowledge of human character. He does not enter within the shrine, and disclose the secret imaginations of the

heart, or reveal the fine springs of action ; nor does he exhibit those flashes of wit and humor which wake the more fanciful associations of the mind. He rises above the observation of manners and common life, and does not sketch the varied lights and fine shades of character.

His heart is all kindness, and he does not delight in pungent satire ; nor has he any of that mighty energy of thought and passion which concentrates a world of meaning into a single word, and that a *word of lightning*. Withdrawn from the ordinary cares and haunts of men, he is always calm and discursive : and although he is seldom illusive or suggestive, he is highly poetical in imagery, association, and expression, while his style is natural and his verse flows with as much ease as his *crystal stream* that proceeds from the *sacred fountain*.

He does not display a universal genius in portraying every thing as it is, but impresses his own image upon every thing he touches ; his creations are all tinged with the hues of his own mind, and in all there is a tender sensibility, and pleasing melancholy, that endear to the heart even his highest fictions. So agreeable are they in this respect, we forget that we are on enchanted ground. His generous and noble heart beats through every line, and this is the cause of the great animation and healthful glow of his creations : he has transfused into them his own soul.

Spenser is delicately sensitive to the impression of beauty, and it is uncommon to find so much tenderness, sensibility, and purity of feeling in his age, as

his own works display : his moral feeling, even in his own impure age, gave tone to his poetical genius. Indeed it is not the least merit of his poetry, that it flows from a pure and elevated moral nature. Had his taste been as refined as his moral sense was pure and noble, his creations would be the perfection of purity and dignity ; they would have been all grace and beauty ; ‘they would have melted with their own sweetness.’ His sensibility and tenderness constantly manifest themselves in the most touching forms ; they are conspicuously displayed even amid the clash of arms, and the most daring feats of military prowess ; a fondness for which he imbibed from the spirit of the age, which was full of romance, and illuminated by the departing glories of chivalry.

The departing spirit of chivalry still hovered over the land ‘like the genius of an Arabian tale,’ and Spenser availed himself of the domains of chivalry and classic fiction, whose resources were as boundless as the imagination, and as rich, in the materials of song.

He has drawn freely from the stores of romance and classical literature, and yet seldom betrays a servile imitation : he marked out a path which genius had not trodden before him. He has a poet’s eye for beauty, and a painter’s perception of form and grace ; and if he does not complete a picture with as few strokes as Chaucer does, yet he has never been excelled in the *felicity* of his descriptions.

Spenser’s wealth of language equals the richness of his imagination, and energizes in poetic forms, with

the greatest ease, the glowing conceptions of his mind. It is claimed, that in him the arts of poetry and painting are as nearly identified as they can be, and that his descriptions variously illustrate the genius of Raphael, Correggio, and other great designers; a very fine conceit, engendered, doubtless, by the spirit of allegory in his *Fairy Queen*. However this may be, it will be seen that the colors of these noble specimens of poetic painting are drawn from his mother tongue: his finest touches are executed in the purest Saxon.

VERSIFICATION OF SPENSER.

Spenser, like Chaucer, is the originator of a form of versification, which possesses a great variety of modulation, and is easily adapted to every form of poetical composition. "Its fullness and richness, its flowing melody, and the stately cadence with which it closes, commend it to the ear by the varied music of which it is susceptible, and to the mind by the breadth and expansion which can be given to the images and sentiments expressed by it." The Spenserian stanza is justly acknowledged to be the richest and most sonorous form of verse in the English language. The variety of its pauses and accents, and the richness of its intonations are unsurpassed: the addition of "that exquisite line," lengthening the time, and increasing the quantity, gives a most charming and elevating effect to its close.

Lo ! I, the man || whose muse whilom did mask, ||
As time her taught, | in lowly shepherd's weeds, ||

Am now enforc'd, | a far unfitter task, |
 For trumpets stern to change mine oaten reeds, |
 And sing of knights' and ladies' gentle deeds; ||
 Whose praises | having slept | in silence long, |
 Me, all—to—mean | the sacred muse areeds |
 To blazon broad | among the learned throng; |
 Fierce wars and faithful loves | shall moralize my song. ||
Fairy Queen, book 1. canto 1.

Thomson attempted to revive this form of verse, and Byron adopted it as best fitted to express a variety of sentiment, but no one has been successful with it, save the great founder himself. He sustains it with perfect ease, and his sweet strains never surfeit. As Spenser was the first to make use of this stanza, he has also been by far the most successful; and of the many who have been led by his example to adopt it, none has equalled, and few have approached him. "One cannot but wonder at the power with which, to the end of so long a poem, he sustains this difficult form of versification, and pours forth stanza after stanza, without fatigue, and apparently without effort. His wing never flags for a moment, and his verse flows with unbroken ease and sweetness to the last." Even in those passages where the higher powers of the poet are not exercised, where he has no higher aim than to carry on the story, the great power of versification is manifest: with but little departure from the natural order of the words, his stanza are always graceful, flowing and melodious.

THE FAIRY QUEEN.

Though the design of this great poem, like Chaucer's Tales, was never completed, yet as it is his mas-

ter production, it best illustrates his genius. In representing the twelve moral virtues under the allegory of actions and sensible imagery, he has annihilated the bounds that separate the ideal and the real worlds, and exhausted the material, and spiritual, worlds, for elements to illustrate, adorn and *moralize his song*.

The poet gives form and substance to the abstractions of the mind ; imbues them with reason and sentiment, and amid the chivalrous glow, and the pathetic adventures, his creations pass before us in an unbroken procession of beautiful and noble forms.

THE RED CROSS KNIGHT,

OR CHRISTIAN PURITY.

A GENTLE KNIGHT was pricking on the plain,
Yclad in mighty arms and silver shield,
Wherein old dints of deep wounds did remain.
The cruel masks of many a bloody field ;
Yet arms till that time did he never wield ;
His angry steed did chide his foaming bit,
As much disdainig to the curb to yield :
Full handsome knight he seem'd, and fair did sit
As one for knightly feats and fierce encounters fit.

And on his breast a bloody cross he bore,
The dear remembrance of his dying lord,
For whose sweet sake that glorious badge he wore,
And dead, as living, ever him ador'd :
Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,
For sovereign hope, which in his help he had.
Right faithful, true he was in deed and word ;
But of his cheer did seem too solemn sad ;
Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was dreaded.

Upon a great adventure he was bound,
 That greatest Gloriana to him gave,
 (The greatest glorious queen of Fairy land,)
 To win him worship, and her grace to have,
 Which of all earthly things he most did crave :
 And ever, as he rode, his heart did yearn
 To prove his puissance in battle brave
 Upon his foe, and his new force to learn ;
 Upon his foe, a dragon horrible and stern.

THE LOVELY UNA,

OR TRUTH.

Una's nature is one of spotless excellence, and in her character of purity and innocence, the emblem of truth is recognized : she possesses every element of human perfection. The *heavenly Una, with her milk-white lamb*, is one of the loveliest creations of genius : she is the impersonation of truth, faith and love.

A lovely LADY rode him fair beside,
 Upon a lowly ass more white than snow ;
 Yet she much whiter ; but the same did hide
 Under a veil, that plaited was full low ;
 And over all a black stole she did throw :
 As one that inly mourned, so was she sad,
 And heavy sate upon her palfrey slow ;
 Seemed in heart some hidden care she had ;
 And by her in a line a milk-white lamb she had.

So pure and innocent, as that same lamb,
 She was in life and every virtuous lore ;
 And by descent from royal lineage came,
 Of ancient kings and queens, that had of yore
 Their scepters stretch'd from east to western shore,
 And all the world in their subjection held ;

Till that infernal Fiend with foul uproar
 Far wasted all their land, and them expell'd,
 Whom to avenge, she had this knight from far compell'd.

* * * * *

One day nigh weary of the irksome way,
 From her unhasty beast she did alight,
 And on the grass her dainty limbs did lay,
 In secret shadow far from all men's sight:
 From her fair head her fillet she undight,
 And laid her stole aside : *her angel's face,*

*As the great eye of heaven shined bright,
 And made a sunshine in the shady place ;*
 Did ever mortal eye behold such heavenly grace ?

THE BOWER OF BLISS.

The bower of bliss is situated upon a floating island, which is embellished with every thing that is calculated to charm the senses, and enchant the soul. It is painted with an oriental affluence of fancy, and is radiant with the gorgeous hues of sunset. The poet has transplanted hither some of the freshest flowers from the sunny gardens of Italy, and they become more fresh and fragrant by the change of climate.

Whence passing forth, they shortly do arrive
 Where at the Bower of Bliss was situate ;
 A place picked out by choice of best alive,
 That nature's work by art can imitate :
 In which whatever in this wordly state
Is sweet and pleasing unto living sense,
 Or that may the daintiest taste delight
 Was poured forth with plentiful expense,
 And made there to abound with lavish affluence,

* * * * *

Thus being entered, they behold around
 A large and spacious plain, on every side
 Strewed with beauties : whose fair grassy ground
 Mantled with green and goodly beautifide
 Will all the ornaments of Flora's pride,
 Wherewith her mother Art, as half in scorn
 Of niggard Nature, like a pompous bride,
 Did deck her and too lavishly adorn
 When forth from virgin bower she comes in th' early morn.

Thereto the heavens, always jovial,
Looked on them lovely, still in steadfast state,
 Nor suffered storm nor frost on them to fall,
 Their tender buds or leaves to violate ;
 Nor scorching heat, nor cold intemperate
 T' afflict the creature which therein did dwell ;
 But the mild air with season moderate
 Gently tempered and disposed so well .
 That still it breathed forth sweet spirit and wholesome smell.

More sweet and wholesome than the pleasant hill
 Of Rhodope, on which the nymph, that bore
 A giant babe, herself for grief did kill ;
 Or the Thasalian Tempe, where of yore
 Fair Daphne Phœbus' heart with love did gore ;
 Or Ida, where the gods lov'd to repair,
 Whenever their heavenly bowers forbore ;
 Or sweet Parnass, the haunt of Muses fair ;
 Or Eden, if that ought with Eden can compare.

Much wondered Guyon at the fair aspect
Of that sweet place, yet suffered no delight
To sink into his sense, nor mind affect,
 But passed forth, and looked still forward right,
 Bridling his will and *mastering his might* ;
 Till that he came unto another gate
 No gate, *but like one*, being goodly sight

With boughs and branches which did broad dilate :
Their clasping arms in wanton wreathings intricate :

So fashioned a porch with rare device
Arched over head with an embracing vine,
Whose branches hanging down seemed to entice
All passers by to touch their luscious wine,
And did themselves into their hands incline,
As freely offering to be gathered ;
Some deep empurpled as the hyacint,
Some as the ruby laughing sweetly red,
So like fair emeralds, not yet well ripened.

And them amongst, some were of burnished gold,
So made by art to beautify the rest,
Which did themselves amongst the leaves unfold,
As lurking from the view of covetous guest,
That the weak boughs with so rich load oppressed
Did bow adown, as over-burdened.
Under that porch a lovely dame did rest,
Clad in fair weeds, but foul disordered,
And garments loose that seemed unmeet for womanhood.

In her left hand a cup of gold she held,
And with her right the riper fruit did reach,
Whose sappy liquor that with fullness swelled
Into her cup she squeezed with dainty breach,
Of her fine fingers without foul impeach,
That so fair wine-press made the wine more sweet ;
Thereof she used to give to drink to each,
Whom passing by she happened to meet ;
It was her guise all strangers goodly so to greet.

She to Guyon offered it to taste ;
Who taking it out of her tender hand,
The cup to ground did violently cast,
That all in pieces, it was broken found ;

And with the liquor stained all the ground ;
Whereat Excess exceedingly was wroth,
Yet no'te the same amend, nor yet withstand,
But suffered him to pass, all where she loth ;
Who not regarding her displeasure, forward go'th.

There the most dainty Paradise on ground
Itself doth offer to his sober eye,
In which all pleasures plenteously abound,
And none does others happiness annoy ;
The painted flowers, the trees upshooting high,
The dales for shade, the hills for breathing space,
The trembling groves, the crystal running by ;
And that which all fair works doth most aggrace,
The art, which all that wrought, appeared in no place.

One would have thought so (cunningly the rude,
And scorned parts mingled with the fine,)
That nature had for wantonness ensured,
Art, and that art and nature did repine ;
So striving each the other to undermine,
Each did the other's works more beautify ;
So differing both in wills, agreed in fine ;
So all agreed through sweet diversity,
This garden to adorn with all variety,

THE FOUNTAIN.

And in the midst of all a fountain stood,
Of richest substance that on earth might be,
So pure and shiny that the silver flood,
Through every channel running one might see ;
Most goodly it with pure imagery,
Was over-wrought and shapes of naked boys,
Of which some seemed with lively jollity,
To fly about, playing their wanton toys,
While others did embathe themselves in liquid joys.

And over all of purest gold was spread,
 A trail of ivy in its native hue ;
 For the rich metal was so colored,
 That wight who did not well advis'd it view,
 Would surely deem it to be ivy true ;
 Low his lascivious arms adown did creep,
 That themselves dipping in the silver dew,
 Their fleecy flowers they tenderly did steep,
 Which drops of crystal seemed for wantonness to weep.

Infinite streams continually did well
 Out of this fountain, sweet and fair to see,
 The which into an ample laver fell,
 And shortly grew to a great quantity,
That like a little lake it seemed to be ;
 Whose depth exceeded not three cubits height,
 That through the waves one might the bottom see,
All paved beneath with jasper shining bright,
 That seem'd a fountain in that sea did sail upright.

And all the margin round about was set,
 With shady laurel trees, thence to defend
 The sunny beams which on the billows bet,
 And those who therein bathed, might offend.

A NYMPH BATHING.

The scene of the nymph bathing here is inimitable for grace and sensibility. She is painted in an "extacy of conscious and luxuriant beauty."

—Her fair locks which formerly was bound
 Up in one knot, she low adown did loose,
 Which flowing long and thick, her cloth'd around,
 And the ivory in golden mantel gown'd,
 So that fair spectacle was from him rest,

Yet that which reft it, no less fair was bound :
 So hid in locks and waves from looker's theft,
 Naught but her lovely face she for his looking left.

*Withal she laugh'd, and she blushed withal,
 That blushing to her laughter gave more grace,
 And laughter to her blushing.*

ENCHANTED MUSIC.

The greatest charm of this blissful bower, is the music ; music that does not flow from a single instrument or a single voice, but from a concert of all that is melodious. To his melodious verse the poet has added all that is sweet and musical in nature.

Eftsoons they heard a most melodious sound,
 Of all that might delight a dainty ear,
 Such as at once might not on living ground
 Save in this paradise, be heard elsewhere ;
 Right hard it was for wight which did it hear,
 To read what manner music that might be ;
 For all that pleasing is to living ear,
 Was there consorted in one harmony,
 Birds, voices, instruments, winds, waters, all agree.

*The joyous birds, shrouded in cheerful shade,
 Their notes unto the voice attempered sweet ;
 Th' angelical soft trembling voices made,
 To th' instruments divine response meet ;
 The silver sounding instruments did meet
 With the base murmur of the water's fall :
 The waters fall with difference discreet,
 Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call :
 The gentle warbling wind low answered to all.*

It is worthy of notice that in these charming stanza the most perfect music is produced with but little or no departure from the natural order of the words. Nothing can be more graceful or flowing than the versification. The thought is taken from the Italian of Tasso, but Spenser has expanded and embellished it from his own affluent fancy, and poured into it the music of his own soul. The song that is sung to the nymph of the Bower is as exquisite, though not as melodious.

The while some one did chaunt the lovely lay,
"Ah see, who so fair a thing dost fain to see
In springing flower the image of thy day!
Ah! see the virgin rose, how sweetly she
Doth first peep forth with bashful modesty,
That fairer seems, the less ye see her may!
Lo! see soon after, how more bold and free
Her bared bosom she doth broad display:
Lo! see soon after how she fades and falls away.

"So passeth, in the passing of a day
Of mortal life, the leaf, the bud, the flower,
Nor more doth flourish after first decay,
That erst was sought to deck both bed and bower
Of many a lady, and many a paramour:
Gather, therefore, the rose while yet is prime,
For soon comes age that will her pride deflower:
Gather the rose of love, while yet is time,
While loving thou mayest be loved with equal crime."

This song is taken from Armida's Elysium, where it is sung by a bird with human voice. It is thus rendered in the beautiful version of Fairfax:

" The gently budding rose, quoth she, behold,
That first scant peeping forth with virgin beams,
Half ope, half shut, her beauties doth unfold
In their clear leaves, and less seen, fairer seems ;
And after spreads them forth more broad and bold,
Then languisheth and dies in last extremes :
Nor seems the same that decked bed and bower
Of many a lady, late, and paramour.

" So in the passing of a day, doth pass
The bud and blossom of the life of man,
Nor ere doth flourish more, but like the grass
Cut down, becometh wither'd, pale and wan :
O gather then the rose while time thou hast,
Short is the day, done when it scant began ;
Gather the rose of love, while yet thou may'st,
Loving, be loved ; embracing, be embraced."

It will be observed that the versification of Spenser is the more majestic and sweet ; indeed it is acknowledged to be far superior, in this respect, to the original itself.

There is much resemblance between the two scenes ; Spenser has placed his Bower on an island in the ocean, and Tasso placed his beyond a lake, upon the summit of a mountain. The English is the most condensed and vivid ; the tale, however, is best in Tasso. The journey to the bower of Armida, in search of Rinaldo, forms one of the most beautiful episodes in the great Italian epic. The cave into which the messengers enter where the universe is reflected, and its hidden laws are disclosed,—the instructions and directions of the seer ;—the beautiful lake over which they are borne in a silver boat, steered by a charming

nymph using golden paddles,—the sweet words she utters as they pass to their destined shore—their adventures in ascending the mountain—the charming contrast when they enter the elysian fields; the song of birds, the fragrance of flowers; and the martial spirit that was inspired in Rinaldo at the sight of his armor—are imperishable pictures which will remain among the brightest visions of romance.

The couch of the nymph is arrayed not unlike the nuptial bower described by Milton:—

He ceased ; and then 'gan all the quire of birds,
Their diverse notes t' attune unto his lay,
As in approvance of his pleasing words.
The constant pair heard all that he did say,
Yet severed not, but kept their forward way
Through many covert groves, and thickets close,
In which they creeping did at last display
The lovely lady with her lover loose,
Whose sleepy head she in her lap did soft dispose.

Upon a bed of roses she was laid,
As faint through heat or dight to pleasant sin ;
And was arrayed, or rather disarrayed,
All in a veil of silk and silver thin,
That hid no whit her alabaster skin,
But rather shew'd more white, if more might be:
More subtle web Arachne can not spin,
Nor the fine nets which oft we woven see
Of scorched dew do not in th' air more lightly flee.

Her snowy neck was bare to ready spoil
Of hungry eyes which note therewith be fill'd ;
And yet through languor of her late sweet toil,
Few drops, more clear than nectar, forth distill'd,

That like pure orient pearls adown it trill'd :
And her fair eyes, sweet smiling in delight,
 Moistened their fiery beams with which she thrill'd,
 Frail hearts, yet quenched not : like starry light
Which sparkling on the silent waves does seem more bright.

The wrath of Guyon is vividly displayed in the destruction of the bower : and it is thus that the poet beats down with a mighty arm, every thing that is not founded in purity and truth.

But all those pleasant bowers and palace brave,
 Guyon broke down with rigor pitiless ;
 Nor aught their goodly workmanship might save
Them from the tempest of his wrathfulness :
 But that their bliss he turned to balefulness :
 Their groves he felled, their gardens did deface ;
 Their arbors spoiled, their cabinets suppress ;
 Their banquet-houses burn, their buildings raze,
 And of the fairest late, now made the foulest place.

PRINCE ARTHUR.

The general end, therefore, of all the Book, is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline : which for that I conceived should be most plausible and pleasing, being colored with an historical fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter than for profit of the ensample, I chose the history of King Arthur, as most fit for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many men's former works, and also further from the danger of envy, and suspicion of present time. In which I have followed all the antique poets historical ; first, Homer, who, in the persons of Agamemnon and Ulysses, hath ensampled a good governor and a virtuous man, the one in his Iliad, the other in his Odyssey ; then Virgil, whose like intention was to do in the person of Æneas ; after him, Ariosto comprised them both in his Orlando ; and lately Tasso discovered them again, and formed both parts in two persons, namely, that part which they in philosophy call ETHIC, or virtues of

a private man, colored in his Rinaldo ; the other named POLITIC, in his Godfredo. By ensample of which excellent poetry, I labor to portray in Arthur, before he was King, the image of a brave Knight, perfected in the twelve moral virtues, as Aristotle hath devised, the which is the purpose of these first twelve books. .

At last she chanced by good hap to meet
 A goodly knight, fair marching by the way,
 Together with his squire arrayed meet :
His glittering armor shined far away,
 Like glancing light of Phæbus' brightest ray ;
 From top to toe no place appeared bare
 That deadly dint of steel endanger may ;
 Athwart his breast a baldric brave he wear,
 That shin'd like twinkling stars, with stones most precious rare.

And in the midst thereof, one precious stone
 Of wondrous worth and eye of wondrous might,
 Shaped like a lady's head, *exceeding shone,*
 Like Hesperus amongst the lesser lights,
 And strove for to amaze the weaker sights :
 Thereby his mortal blade full comely hung,
 In ivory sheath engraved with curious sleights,
 Whose hilts were burnished gold ; and handle strong,
 Of mother pearl ; and buckled with a golden tongue.

His haughty helmet, horrid all with gold,
 Both glorious brightness and great terror bred ;
 For all the crest a dragon did enfold
 With greedy paws, and over all did spread
 His golden wings ; his dreadful hideous head
 Close couched on the beaver, seemed to throw
 From flaming mouth bright sparkles fiery red,
That sudden horror to faint hearts did show ;
 And scaly tail was stretch'd adown his back full low.

Upon the top of all his lofty crest,
 A bunch of hairs discolord diversely

*With sprinkled pearl and gold full richly drest,
 Did shake and seemed to dance for jollity;
 Like to an almond tree upmounted high
 On top of green Selinis all alone,
 With blossoms brave bedecked daintily;
 Whose tender locks do tremble every one
 At every little breath that under heaven is blown.*

His warlike shield all closely covered^{was},
 Nor might of mortal eye be ever seen;
 Not made of steel nor of enduring brass,
 (Such earthly metals soon consumed been)
 But all of diamond perfect, pure and clean;
 It framed was, one massy entire mould
 Hewn out of adamant rock with engines keen,
 That point of spear it never piercen could,
 Nor dint of direful sword divide the substance would.

*The same to wight he never would disclose,
 But when as monsters huge he would dismay
 Or daunt unequal armies of his foes,
 Or when the flying heavens he would affray;
 For so exceeding shown his glittering ray—*

This vivid delineation is very much like Milton's inimitable description, (Par. Lost, Book VI, line 760.)

He, in celestial panoply all arm'd
 Of radiant Urim, work divinely wrought,
 Ascended; at his right hand Victory
 Set eagle-winged; beside him hung his bow
 And quiver with three-bolted thunder stored:
 And from about him fierce effusion rolled,
 Of smoke and bickering flame and sparkles dire:
 Attended with ten thousand saints
 He onward came; *far off his coming shone.*

Far off his coming shone.

"This," says Mr. Montgomery, "is one of the most poetic images in the English language:" and it illustrates the wonderful effect that may be given in a few words. The profuse description that precedes, does not portray the glory of the Son half so vividly as this short line—*far off his coming shone*. The impression is distinct, yet there is the most ample room for the imagination to play.

Spenser has not the intensity of this expression, but has much, if not all, the beauty of the thought.

His glittering armor shined far away.

PRINCE ARTHUR

UNVEILS HIS ARMOR TO THE STEEDS OF THE SOLDAN.

Thus long they trac'd and travers'd to and fro,
Seeking by every way to make some breach :
Yet could the Prince not nigh unto him go,
That one sure stroke he might unto him reach,
Whereby his strength's essay he might him teach.
At last from his victorious shield he drew
The veil, which did his powerful light impeach ;
And coming full before his horse's view,
As they upon him press'd, *it plain to them did shew.*

Like lightning flash that hath the gazer burned,
So did the sight thereof their sense dismay,
That back again upon themselves they turned,
And with their rider ran perforce away ;

Milton vanquishes the enemies of God with the same stroke of genius.

—————" Full soon
Among them he arrived ; in his right hand

Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent
 Before him, such as in their souls imfix'd
 Plagues ; *they astonished, all resistance lost,*
All courage."

Par. Lost, Book vi. Line 834.

The flight of the Soldan's steeds is as rapid as that
 of the vanquished angels.

Fast did they fly, as them their feet could bear
High over hills, and lowly over dales,
As they were follow'd of their former fear.

* * * * *

As when the fiery mouthed steeds, which drew
 The sun's bright wain to Phæton's decay,
 Soon as they did the monstrous scorpion view,
 With ugly craples crawling in their way,
 The dreadful sight did them so sore affray,
 That their well known courses they forewent :
And leading the ever-burning lamp astray
This lower world well nigh to ashes brent,
And left their scorched path yet in the firmament.

Such was the fury of their headstrong steeds,
 Soon as the infant's sun-like shield they saw,
 That all obedience to words and deeds,
 They quite forgot *and scorned all former law ;*
 Through woods, and rocks, and mountains they did draw,
 And toss'd the Paynim, without fear or awe ;
 From side to side they tossed him here and there,
 Crying to them in vain, that n'ould his crying hear.

BELPHEBE.

—Eftsoon there stepped forth
 A goodly lady clad in hunter's weeds,
 That seemed to be a woman of great worth,
 And by her stately 'portance born of heavenly birth.

This radiant vision is accompanied by a train of sweet associations, and sylvan images. The dewy breezes have imparted to her their freshness, the springing flowers their beauty, and the swaying foliage its grace. She is pure and passionless; radiant with woman's charms, but destitute of her tender affections.

The fine fancy and tender sensibility of Spenser qualify him to excel in the portraiture of the womanly character. He is always felicitous here; and his sketches of their feminine nature are among his most interesting passages.

He traces minutely in his various characters the several forms of female excellence. His passion for the beautiful and the lovely, inclines him often to rise above, and never to fall below, nature.

The qualification he bestows is generally given to perfection, and we see that the character is human only because it lacks perhaps a single grace. She may have a pure spirit, but is destitute of the softer passions. She may be dignified and intellectual, but without beauty. She may seem to be composed of elements as sweet and delicate as the fragrance of summer flowers, but then she is timid and wild as the winds. He seldom ascribes to a female character anything harsh or unnatural, but makes her gentle and unearthly; she has so much of the attractive and graceful, with the ideal and lofty, that she is a creature for admiration, but not for love.

"Too fair for worship, too divine for love."

Her face so fair as flesh it seemed not,
 But heavenly portrait of bright angels' hue,
 Clear as the sky withouten blame or blot,
 Though goodly mixture of complexions due ;
 And in her cheeks the vermeil red did shew
Like roses in a bed of lilies shed,
 The which ambrosial odors from them threw,
 And gazers sense with double pleasure feed,
 Able to heal the sick and to revive the dead.

Her ivory forehead, full of beauty brave,
 Like a broad table did itself dispread,
 For love his lofty triumphs to engrave,
 And write the battles of his great godhead ;
All good and honor might therein be read ;
 For there their dwelling was. And when she spake
Sweet words like dropping honey, she did shed,
 And 'twixt the pearls and rubies *softly brake*
A silver sound, that heavenly music seemed to make,

Under her eyelids many Graces sate,
 Under the shadow of her even brows,
 Working belgards, and amorous retreat.
And every one her with a grace endows ;
And every one with meekness to her bows,
 So glorious mirror of celestial grace,
 And sovereign monument of mortal vows,
 How shall frail pen describe her heavenly face,
 For fear through want of skill, her beauty to disgrace ?

* * * * *

FLORIMEL.

She is a beautiful vision ; her name is composed of two words, meaning *honey and flowers*, emblematic of the sweet and delicate elements of which her na-

ture is formed ; Shrinking alike from friend and foe,
she displays the delicacy, the sensitiveness, and the
timidity of woman.

All suddenly out of the thickest brush,
Upon a milk-white palfrey all alone,
A goodly lady did fast by them rush,
Whose face did seem as clear as crystal stone,
And eke, through fear, as white as whale's bone :
Her garments all were wrought of beaten gold,
And all her steed with tinsel trappings shone,
Which fled so fast that nothing might him hold,
And scarce them leisure gave her passing to behold.

Still as she fled, her eye she backward threw,
As fearing evil that pursued her fast ;
And her fair yellow locks behind her flew,
Loosely dispers'd with puff of every blast :
All as a blazing star doth far outcast,
His hairy beams, and flaming locks dispread,
At sight whereof the people stand aghast ;
But the sage wizard tells, as he has read,
That it importunes death and doleful dreryhed. }

PASTORELLA AND CALIDORE.

Pastorella is a perfect form of female excellence and
loveliness : "she is full of a fresh, woodland beauty,
and painted with a pencil dipped in morning dew."

—————He them beside
Saw a fair damsel, which did wear a crown,
Of sundry flowers with silken ribbons tied,
All clad in home-made green that her own hands had dyed.

Upon a little hillock she was placed,
Higher than all the rest, and round about

Environ'd with a garland, goodly graced,
 Of lovely lasses ; and them all without
 The lusty shepherd swains sate in a rout,
 The which did pipe and sing her praises due,
 And oft rejoyce, and oft for wonder shout,
 As if some miracle of heavenly hue,
 Were down to them descended in that earthly view.

And soothly sure she was full fair of face,
 And perfectly well shaped in every limb,
 Which she did more augment with modest grace,
 And comely carriage of her count'nance trim,
 That all the rest like lesser lamps did dim :
 Who her admiring as some heavenly wight,
 Did for their sovereign goddess her esteem,
 And caroling her name both day and night,
 The fairest Pastorella her by name did dight.

CHARISSA ;

OR CHARITY.

Character, spiritual Love ; Painter for it, Raphael.

HUNT.

She was a woman in her freshest age,
 Of wondrous beauty and of bounty rare,
 With goodly grace and comely personage,
 That was on earth not easy to compare ;
 Full of great love ; but Cupid's wanton snare
 As hell she hated, chaste in work and will ;

* * * * *

And on her head she wore a tire of gold,
 Adorned with gems and owches wondrous fair,
 Whose passing price uneath was to be told ;
 And by her side there sate a gentle pair
 Of turtle doves, she sitting in an ivory chair.

FANCY.

Nothing we think can illustrate more fully the creating and moulding power of the imagination than thus to give form and substance to the abstract powers of the mind :

The while a most delicious harmony :
 In full strange notes was sweetly heard to sound,
 That the rare sweetness of the melody
 The feeble senses wholly did confound,
 And the frail soul in deep delight nigh drowned ;
 And when it ceas'd, shrill trumpets loud did bray,
 That their report did far away rebound,
 And when they ceas'd it 'gan again to play,
 The while the maskers marched forth in trim away.

* * * * *
 The first was Fancy like a lovely boy
 Of rare aspect, and beauty without peer :

* * * * *
*His garments neither was of silk nor say,
 But painted plumes in goodly order dight,
 Like as the sun-burnt Indians do array
 Their tawny bodies, in their proudest plight ;
 And those same plumes, so seemed he vain and light,
 That by his gait might easily appear ;
 For still he far'd as dancing in delight,
 And in his hand a windy fan did bear,
 That in the idle air he mov'd still here and there.*

The playfulness of fancy is beautifully drawn in a single line :

Still he far'd as dancing in delight.

And in his hand a windy fan did bear,
That in the idle air he mov'd still here and there.

H O P E.

The incarnation of hope is still more beautiful and exquisite if possible : here are life, sweetness and delicacy.

With him went Hope in rank, a handsome maid
 Of cheerful look and *lovely to behold* :
 In silken samite she was light array'd,
 And her fair locks were woven up in gold.
She always smiled : and in her hand did hold
 An holy-water sprinkle dipp'd in dew,
 With which she sprinkled favors manifold,
 On whom she list and did great liking shew,
 Great liking unto many, *but true love to few.*

She always smiled.

In these three words is comprised the whole of Goldsmith's stanza, itself full of beauty :

Hope, like the glimmering taper's light,
 Adorns and cheers the way
 And still as darker grows the night
 Emits a brighter ray.

Spenser can paint to the ear, so to speak, as well as to the eye. The sounds that lull the sleeper in the house of Morpheus are such as are found nowhere else :

*And more to lull him in his slumbers soft,
 A trickling stream from high rock tumbling down,*

*And ever drizzling rain upon the loft,
Mix'd with a murmuring wind, much like the sound
Of swarming bees, did cast him in a swoon.*

Again, the distant *merry sound* of the nymphs dancing to the shepherd's pipe, would attract one of a common ear, or very moderate curiosity.

Unto this place, when as the elfin knight,
Approach'd, him seemed that *the merry sound,*
Of a shrill pipe he playing heard on hight,
And *many feet fast thumping* th' hollow ground,
That through the woods their echo did rebound,
He nigher drew, to weet what might it be ;
There he a troop of ladies dancing found,
Full merrily and making gladful glee,
And in the midst a shepherd piping he did see.

The sight he enjoys is a recompense for his pains, and breathless silence.

He durst not enter into the open green,
For dread of them unawares to be descried
For breaking of their dance, if he were seen ;
But in the covert of the wood did bide,
Beholding all, yet of them unespied.
There he did see, that pleased much his sight,
That even he himself his eyes envied :
A hundred *laughing* maidens, lily white,
All ranged in a ring and dancing in delight,

The queen of this occasion is worthy of the honors bestowed upon her.

Such was the beauty of this goodly band,
Whose sundry parts were here too long to tell :
But she that in the midst of them did stand

*Seem'd all the rest in beauty to excel,
 Crown'd with a rosy garland, that right well
 Did her become. And ever as the crew
 About her danced, sweet flowers that far did smell,
 And fragrant odors they upon her threw ;
 But most of all those there did her with gifts endue.*

And so thinks her lover, the poet :

*So far as doth the daughter of the day,
 All other lesser lights in light excel,
 So far doth she in beautiful array,
 Above all other lasses bear the bell ;
 Nor less in virtue that beseems her well,
 Doth she exceed the rest of all her race ;
 For which the graces that here wont to dwell
 Have for more honor brought her to this place,
 And graced her so much to be another grace.*

*Another Grace she well deserves to be,
 In whom so many graces gathered are,
 Excelling much the mean of her degree ;
 Divine resemblance, beauty sovereign rare,
 For chastity, that spite nor blemish dare ;
 All which she with such courtesy doth grace,
 That all her peers cannot with her compare,
 But quite are dimmed when she is in place,
 She made me often pipe, and now to pipe apace.*

THE BUTTERFLY.

This beautiful specimen, which is taken from the "Muipotomus," for delicacy of fancy and felicity of description, is worthy of a place in the "gallery of pictures from Spenser."

The woods, the rivers, and the meadows green,
With his air-cutting wings he measur'd wide ;
Nor did he leave the mountains bare unseen,
Nor the rank grass fen's delights untri'd :
But none of these, however sweet they been,
Might please his fancy, nor him cause abide.
His choiceful sense with every change doth flit ;
No common things may please a wavering wit.

To the gay gardens his unstay'd desire
Him wholly carried, to refresh his sprites,
There lavish Nature, in her best attire,
Pours forth sweet odors and alluring sights ;
And art with her contending, doth aspire,
T' excel the natural with made delights ;
And all that fair or pleasant may be found,
In riotous excess doth there abound.

There he arriving, round about doth fly
From bed to bed, from one to other border,
And takes survey, with curious busy eye,
Of every flower and herb there set in order ;
Now this, now that, he tasteth tenderly,
Yet none of them he rudely doth disorder,
Nor with his feet their silken leaves deface,
But pastures on the pleasures of each place.

And ever more, with most variety,
And change of sweetness (for all change is sweet)
He casts his glutton sense to satisfy ;
Now, sucking of the sap of herb most meet,
Or of dew which yet on them does lie,
Now in the same bathing his tender feet ;
And then he percheth on some bank thereby,
To weather him, and his moist wings to dry.

SONNET.

Mark, when she smiles with amiable cheer,
 And tell me, whereto can ye liken it ?
 When on each eye-lid sweetly do appear
 An hundred graces, as in shade, to sit.
 Likest it seemeth, in my simple wit,
 Unto the fair sunshine in summer's day,
 That, when a dreadful storm away is flit
 Through the broad world doth spread his goodly ray ;
 At sight whereof, each bird that sits on spray,
 And every beast that to his den was fled,
 Comes forth afresh out of their late dismay,
 And to the light lift up their drooping head.
 So my storm-beaten heart likewise is cheered
 With that sunshine, when cloudy looks are cleared.

EARTHLY GLORY.

[FROM THE "RUINS OF TIME."—*Ellis.*]

O vain world's glory and unsteadfast state,
 Of all that lives on face of sinful earth !
 Which from their first, until their utmost date,
 Taste no one hour of happiness or mirth :
 * * * * *
 Why then doth flesh, a bubble-glass of breath,
 Hunt after honor and advancement vain,
 And rear a trophy for devouring Death,
 With so great labor, and long-lasting pain,
 As if his days forever should remain ?
 Since all that in this world, is great or gay,
 Doth as a vapor vanish and decay.

Look back, who list, unto the former ages,
 And call to count what is of them become ;
 Where be those learned wits and antique sages,

Which of all wisdom knew the perfect sum ?
 Where those great warriors which did overcome
 The world with conquest of their might and main.
 And made one meare of the earth and of their reign ?

* * * * *

*High towers, fair temples, goodly theatres,
 Strong walls, rich porches, princely palaces,
 Large streets, brave houses, sacred sepulchres,
 Sure gates, sweet gardens, stately galleries,
 Wrought with fair pillars and fine imageries :*
 All those, O pity ! *now are turn'd to dust,*
 And overgrown with black oblivion's rust.

* * * * *

Where my high steeples whilom used to stand,
 On which the lonely falcon, wont to tower,
 There now is but an heap of lime and sand,
 For the screech-owl to build her baleful bower ;
 And, where the nightingale, wont forth to pour
 Her restless plaints, to comfort wakeful lovers,
 There now haunt yelling mews and whining plovers.

* * * * *

O trustless state of miserable men !
 That build your bliss on hope of earthly thing,
 And vainly think yourselves half happy, then,
 When painted faces, with smooth flattering
 Do fawn on you, and your wide praises sing !
 And when the courting masker routeth low,
 Him true in heart and trusty to you trow !

All is but feigned, and with oker dy'd,
 That every shower will wash and wipe away ;
 All things do change that under heaven abide,
 And after death all friendship doth decay ;
 Therefore, whatever men bear'st worldly sway,

*Living, on God and on thyself rely,
For, when thou diest, all shall with thee die.*

But the beauty of Spenser can scarce be seen in detached parts. Half the genius of his poetry seems to have fled when the thread of the story is broken. He is so much above the common sentiment, that a few passages do not raise the mind to a sympathy with him. His glories are obscured until one has entered and dwelt in his ideal realms, and contracted by intimacy, a sympathy with the creatures of his imagination. Position is as important to him as attitude is to the sculptor. Everything around him has a meaning that words cannot express. The sweetness that inspires his heart, and the visions that throng his mind, are to be inferred rather than read; in the words of Marlowe, he has "Beauty beyond Expression."

If all the pens that ever poet held,
Had fed the feeling of their master's thoughts,
And every sweetness that inspired their hearts,
And minds and muses on admired themes;
If all the heavenly quintessence, they still
From their immortal fountains of poesy,
Wherein, as in a mirror, we perceive
The highest reaches of a human wit;
If these had made one poem's period,
And all combined in beauty's worthiness.
Yet should there hover in their restless heads,
One thought, one grace, one wonder at the best,
Which into words no virtue can digest.

"No one can flatter himself," says an able writer, "that he has mastered the wealth of the English tongue, who has not devoted his days and nights to Spenser," and this is the common sentiment with regard to this great poet. This was the opinion of Mr. Ellis, who says of him, his "glowing fancy, his unbounded command of language, and his astonishing facility and sweetness of versification, have placed him in the very first rank of English poets." He is placed next to Shakspeare and Milton by Sir James Mackintosh, who, after having finished the reading of the *Fairy Queen*, says: "I never parted from a long poem with so much regret. He is a poet of a most musical ear—of a tender heart—of a peculiarly soft, rich, fertile, and flowery fancy. His verse always flows with ease and nature, most abundantly and sweetly; his diffusion is not only pardonable but agreeable; grandeur and energy are not his characteristic qualities. He seems to be a most genuine poet, and to be justly placed after Shakspeare and Milton, and above all other English poets."

MARLOWE, DANIEL,

DRAYTON, SIDNEY, RALEIGH, AND SYLVESTER.



These men are associated for the purpose of condensation, rather than for any supposed analogy of their productions. It is not our object to illustrate the different classes of literature, but to collect the most beautiful specimens; to collect the jewels of genius, and extract the honey from the nectar flowers of Parnassus. These writers are of unequal merit, but alike in this, that they belong to a subordinate class of poets. They have all had their admirers; some of whom beheld in them, genius of the highest order; but they are illustrious in Reviews rather than genius, or great works that evince it. Some of them "shook hands with Shakspeare," and Marlowe has been compared with him, but the "mantle of his genius" fell on none of them: all the works of Marlowe, however, and the smaller pieces of the others, contain some gems of the first water.

Marlowe is claimed to be a "born poet," and justly, for the fire and vigor of his genius have been surpassed but by few: the beauty and sublimity which

he occasionally displays in his writings give him an honorable standing in the ranks of genius. He had the spirit and the *fine madness* of the true poet.

—Marlowe, bathed in the Thespian springs,
Had in him those brave translunar things
That the first poets had; *his raptures were*
All air and fire, which made his verses clear
For that fine madness still he did retain,
Which rightly should possess a poet's brain.

DRAYTON.

"He perceived things," Mr. Hunt observes, "in their spiritual as well as material relations, and impressed them with a corresponding felicity. Rather he struck them with something sweet and glowing that rushes by;—perfumes from a censer,—glances of love and beauty. And he could accumulate images into as deliberate and lofty grandeur. Chapman said of him, that he stood

Up to the chin in the Pierian flood."

Mr. Campbell seems to think that he would have emulated Shakspeare, had he not been prematurely cut off; "had he lived longer to profit by the example of Shakspeare, it is not straining conjecture to suppose, that the strong misguided energy of Marlowe would have kindled and refined to excellence by the rivalry."

Marlowe and Spenser are independent of their ancestors: they struck out a native vein of genius. Spenser stands alone in his luxuriant imagination,

and his melodious versification : one was too rich and varied, the other too harmonious and stately to be emulated. Marlowe, in the beauty of his words, the sweetness of his versification, his grace and pathos, prepared the way for his successors. " His imagination, like Spenser's, haunted those purely poetic regions of ancient fabling and modern rapture, of beautiful forms and passionate expressions, which they were the first to render the common property of inspiration, and whence their language drew 'empyrean air.' Marlowe and Spenser are the first of our poets who perceived the beauty of words : not as apart from their signification, nor upon occasion only, as Chaucer did, (more marvelous in that than themselves, or than the originals from which he drew) but as a habit of the poetic mood, and as receiving and reflecting beauty through the feeling of the ideas."

THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE.

*Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hill and valley, grove and field,
And all the craggy mountains yield;
There will we sit upon the rocks,
And see the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals :
There will I make thee beds of roses,
With a thousand fragrant posies :
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle,
Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle ;
A gown made of the finest wool,
Which from our pretty lambs we pull :*

Slippers lined choicely for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold :
A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing,
For thy delight each May morning ;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Then live with me and be my love.

“ Marlowe,” says Philips, “ is a second Shakspeare, not only because he rose like him from an actor to be a maker of plays, though inferior both in fame and merit : but also because in his begun poem of Hero and Leander, he seems to have a resemblance of that *clear unsophisticated wit*, which is natural to that incomparable poet.” In his tragedy of Edward the Second, there are passages which warrant this remark and establish his reputation as a child of nature. He admirably contrives such entertainments as afford the highest gratification to the profligate king, and at the same time makes him subject to his will.

EDWARD THE SECOND.

THE PLEASURES WHICH THE KING DELIGHTS IN.

I must have wanton poets, pleasant wits,
Musicians, that with touching of a string
May draw the pliant King which way I please.
Music and poetry are his delight :
Therefore I'll have Italian masques by night,
Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows,
And in the day, when he shall walk abroad,
Like sylvan Nymphs, my pages shall be clad,
My men like Satyrs grazing on the lawns,

Shall with their goat-feet dance the antic hay.
 Sometimes a Lovely Boy, in Dian's shape,
 With hair that gilds the water as it glides,
 Crownets of pearl about his naked arms,
 And in his shortful hands an olive tree.

* * * * *

Shall bathe him in a spring : and there hard by,
 One like Acteon, peeping through the grove,
 Shall by the angry goddess be transformed,—
 Such things as these best please his Majesty.

THE RICH JEW OF MALTA.

Barabbas, the rich Jew ; his idea of wealth.

Give me the merchants of the Indian mines,
 That trade in metal of the purest mould ;
 The wealthy Moor, that in the Eastern rocks,
 Without control, can pick his riches up,
 And in his house heap pearl like pebble-stones ;
 Receive them free, and sell them by the weight,
 Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,
 Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds,
 Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,
 And seld-seen costly stones of so great price,
 As one of them, indifferently rated,
 And of a carat of this quality,
 May serve in peril of calamity,
 To ransom great kings from captivity.
This is the ware wherein consists my wealth ;
 And thus methinks should men of judgment frame
 Their means of traffic from the vulgar trade,
 And as their wealth increaseth, so inclose
Infinite riches in a little room.

DR. FAUSTUS.

Faustus determines to addict himself to magic, being instructed in the elements of which, he sells his soul to the devil, for the services of an Evil Spirit, for twenty-four years—at the expiration of which time his soul is claimed.

Faust. These metaphysics of Magicians,
And necromantic books, are heavenly.
Lines, Circles, Letters, Characters ;
Aye, these are those that Faustus most desires.
O what a world of profit and delight
Of power, of honor, of omnipotence,
Is promised to the studious artizan !
All things that move between the quiet poles,
Shall be at my command. Emperors and kings,
Are but obey'd in their several provinces ;
But his dominion that exceeds in this,
Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man ;
A sound Magician is a demigod.
Here tire my brains to gain a deity.

* * * * *

Faustus alone. The clock strikes eleven.

Faust, O Faustus,
Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damn'd perpetually.
Stand still you ever-moving spheres of heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight never come !
Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise again, and make
Perpetual day : or let this hour be but
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
That Faustus may repent and save his soul :
The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,
The devil will come, and Faustus must be damn'd,

O I will leap to heaven, who pulls me down ?
See where Christ's blood streams in the firmament ;
One drop of blood will save me ; Oh, my Christ,
Rend not my heart for naming of my Christ,
Yet will I call on him : O spare me, Lucifer.
Where is it now ? 'tis gone !
And see, a threatening arm, an angry brow.

Mountains and hills come, come, and fall on me,
And hide me from the heavy wrath of heaven.
No ? then I will headlong run into the earth :
Gape Earth ! O no, it will not harbor me.
You stars that reigned at my nativity,
Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,
Now draw up Faustus like a foggy mist,
Into the entrails of yon laboring cloud ;
That when you vomit forth into the air,
My limbs may issue from your smoky mouths,
But let my soul mount, and ascend to heaven.

[*The watch strikes.*]

O, half the hour is past ; 'twill all be past anon—
O, if my soul must suffer for my sin,
Impose some end to my incessant pain.
Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years,
A hundred thousand and at the last be saved :
No end is limited to damned souls.
Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul ?
Or why is this immortal which thou hast ?
Oh, Pythagoras, Metempsychosis, were that true,
This soul should fly from me, and I be changed
Into some brutish beast.
All beasts are happy, for when they die
Their souls are soon dissolved in elements ;
But mine must live still to be plagued in hell.
Curst be the parents that engendered me :

No, Faustus, curse thyself, curse Lucifer,
That hath deprived thee of the joys of heaven.

[*The clock strikes twelve.*]

It strikes, it strikes! now, body, *turn to air*,
Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell.
O soul, be chang'd into small water drops,
And fall into the ocean: ne'er be found.

[*Thunder and the Devils enter.*]

O mercy, heaven, look not so fierce on me.
Adders and serpents, let me breathe awhile;
Ugly hell gape, not: come not Lucifer:
I'll burn my books: Oh, Mephistophiles!

* * * * *

[*Enter SCHOLARS.*]

First sch. Come gentleman, let us go visit Faustus,
For such a dreadful night was never seen,
Since first the world's creation did begin;
Such fearful shrieks and cries were never heard.
Pray heaven the Doctor have escaped the danger.

Sec. sch. O help us, heavens! see here are Faustus'
limbs,
All torn asunder by the hand of death.

Third sch. The devil whom Faustus serv'd hath torn
him thus:

For 'twixt the hours of twelve and one, methought
I heard him shriek, and call aloud for help;
At which same time the house seem'd all on fire,
With dreadful horror of these damned fiends.

Sec. sch. Well, gentleman, though Faustus' end be such
As every christian heart laments to think on:
Yet, for he was a scholar once admired,
For wondrous knowledge in our German schools,
We'll give his mangled limbs due burial:
And all the scholars, cloth'd in mourning black,

Shall wait upon his heavy funeral.

Chorus. Cut is the branch that might have grown full
strait,

And burn'd is Apollo's laurel bough,

That sometime grew within this learned man :

Faustus is gone ! Regard his hellish fall,

Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise

Only to wonder at unlawful things :

Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits,

To practice more than heavenly power permits.

Daniel is characterized for his natural tenderness, and simplicity of style—"he is distinguished for elegance rather than sublimity of expression," and has been styled the Atticus of his day. He is grave and dignified ; in some of his occasional pieces there is a "vast philosophic gravity and stateliness of sentiment." His sonnets are his most beautiful productions.

S O N N E T .

Beauty, sweet love, is like the morning dew,

Whose short refresh upon the tender green,

Cheers for a time, but till the sun doth show,

And strait 'tis gone as it had never been.

Soon doth it fade that makes the fairest flourish,

Short is the glory of the blushing rose ;

The hue which thou so carefully dost nourish,

Yet which at length thou must be forced to lose

When thou surcharged with burthen of thy years,

Shalt bend thy wrinkles homeward to the earth,

And that in beauty's lease, expired appears

The date of age, the calends of our death—

But ah ! no more—this must not be foretold,

For, women grieve to think they must be old.

SONNET.

I must not grieve my love, whose eyes would read
 Lines of delight whereon her youth might smile ;
 Flowers have a time before they come to seed,
 And she is young, and now must sport the while.
 And sport, sweet maid, in season of these years,
 And learn to gather flowers before they wither,
 And when the sweetest blossom first appears,
 Let Love and Youth conduct thy pleasures thither !
 Lighten forth smiles to clear the clouded air,
 And calm the tempest which my sighs do raise ;
 Pity and smiles do best become the fair,
 Pity and smiles must only yield the praise.
 Make me to say, when all my griefs are gone,
 Happy the heart that sighed for such a one !

PASTORAL.

O happy golden age ;
 Not for, that rivers ran
 With streams of milk and honey dropt from trees ;
 Not that the earth did gage,
 Unto the husbandman,
 Her voluntary fruits, free, without fees ;
 Not for, no cold did freeze
 Nor any cloud beguile
 Th' eternal flowering spring,
 Wherein liv'd everything,
 And whereon the heavens perpetually did smile ;
 Not for, no ship had brought
 From foreign shores, or wars, or wares ill sought ;
 But only for, that name,
That idle name of wind,
 That idol of deceit, that empty sound,
Call'd honor, which became

The tyrant of the mind,
And so torments our nature without ground,
Was not yet vainly found ;
Nor yet sad grief imparts
Amidst the sweet delights
Of joyful amorous wights,
Nor were his hard laws known to free-born hearts ;
But golden laws, like these
Which Nature wrote—*That's lawful which doth*
please.

Then amongst flowers and springs
Making delightful sport
Sat lovers, without conflict, without flame,
And nymphs and shepherds sing,
Mixing in wanton sort,
Whispering with songs, then kisses with same,
Which from affection came.
The naked virgin then
Her roses fresh reveals,
Which now her veil conceals
The tender apples in her bosom seen :
And oft in rivers clear,
The lovers with their loves consorting were.

HONOR ! thou first didst close
The spring of all delight,
Denying water to the amorous thirst :
Thou taught'st fair eyes to lose
The glory of their light,
Restrain'd from men and on themselves revers'd :
Thou in a lawn didst first
Those golden hairs incase,
Late spread unto the wind :
Thou mad'st loose grace unkind,
Gav'st bridle to their words, art to their pace.

Oh, HONOR, it is thou
That mak'st that stealth which Love doth free allow :
It is thy work that brings
Our griefs and torments thus,
But thou, fierce lord of nature and of love,
The qualifier of kings,
What dost thou hear with us,
That are below thy power, shut from above ?
Go ; and from us remove !
Trouble the mighty's sleep,
Let us neglected, base
Live still without thy grace,
And th' use of the ancient happy ages keep !
Let's love ! the sun doth set and rise again,
But when as our short light
Comes once to set, it makes eternal night.

Drayton's poetry abounds in learned narrative and labored description ; his language is free and perspicuous, and his imagery is elegant, but it wants depth of feeling. There is an air of romance about much of his poetry, but it does not pervade it ; it is the play of fancy on the surface. Though his descriptions are striking and curious, they become tedious in his longer pieces. There is brilliancy and grace about his lighter pieces ; they are "airy and sportive," full of fancy in its "creative playfulness."

THE BARON'S WARS.

THE CASTLE.

Within the castle hath the queen devised
A chamber with choice rarities so fraught,
As in the same she had imparadised,

Almost what man by industry hath sought ;
 Where with the curious pencil was comprised,
 What could with colors by the art be wrought,
 In the most sure place of the castle there,
 Which she had named the Tower of Mortimer.
 An orbal form with pillars small composed,
 Which to the top-like parallels do bear,
 Arching the compass where they were inclosed,
 Fashioning the fair roof like the hemisphere,
 In whose partitions by the lines disposed
 All the clear northern asterisms were,
 In their corporeal shapes with stars inched,
 As by the old poets they in heaven were placed
 About which lodgings, tow'rds the upper face,
 Ran a fine bordure, circularly led,
 As equal 'twixt the highest point and base,
 That as a zone the waist ingirdled,
 That lends the sight a breathing, or a space
 'Twixt things near view, and those far overhead,
 Under the which the painter's curious skill,
 In lively forms the goodly room did fill.

* * * * * *

EDWARD'S *entrance to the castle,*

Without the castle, in the earth is found
 A cave, *resembling sleepy Morpheus' cell,*
 In strange meanders winding under ground,
 Where darkness seeks continually to dwell,
 Which with such fear and horror doth abound,
 As though it were an entrance into hell ;
 By architects to serve the castle made,
 When as the Danes this island did invade.
 Now on along the crankling path doth keep,
 Then by a rock, turns up another way,
 Rising tow'rds day, then falling tow'rds the deep

On a smooth level then itself doth lay,
Directly then, then obliquely doth creep,
Nor in the course keeps any certain stay ;
 Till in the castle, in an odd by-place,
 It casts the foul mask from its dusky face.
By which the king, with a selected crew,
Of such as he with his intent acquainted,
Which he affected to the action knew,
And in revenge of Edward had not fainted,
And to their utmost would the cause pursue,
And with those treasons that had not been tainted,
 Adventur'd the labyrinth to assay,
 To rouse the beast which kept them all at bay.
Long after Phœbus took his laboring team
To his pale sister, and resigned his place,
To wash his cauples in the open stream,
And cool the fervor of his glowing face ;
And Phœbe, scanted of her brother's beam
Into the west went after him apace,
 Leaving black darkness to possess the sky
 To fit the time of that black tragedy.
What time by torch-light they attempt the cave,
Which at their entrance seemed in a fright,
With the reflection that their armor gave,
As it till then had ne'er seen any light ;
Which striving there pre-eminence to have,
Darkness therewith so daringly doth fight,
 That each confounding other, both appear
 As darkness light, and light but darkness were.
The craggy cliffs, which cross them as they go,
Made as their passage they would have denied,
And threat'ned them their journey to foreslow,
As angry with the path that was their guide ;
And sadly seem'd their discontent to show,
To the vile hand that did them first divide ;
 Whose cumbrous falls and risings seem'd to say,

So ill an action could not brook the day.
And by the lights, as they along were led,
Their shadows then them following at their back,
Were like to mourners carrying forth their dead,
 And as the deed, so were they, ugly, black,
 Or like to fiends that them had follow'd,
 Pricking them on to bloodshed and to wrack :

 Whilst the light look'd as it had been amazed,
 At their deformed shapes, whereon it gazed.
Their clattering arms their masters seemed to chide,
 As they would reason wherefore they should wound,
 And struck the cave in passing on each side,
 As they were angry with the hollow ground,
 That it an act so pitiless should hide ;
Whose stony roof locked in their angry sound,
 And hanging in the creeks, drew back again,
 As willing them from murder to refrain.

* * * * * *

THE QUEEN AND MORTIMER.

The night wax'd old (not dreaming of these things,)
 And to her chamber is the queen withdrawn,
 To whom a choice musician plays and sings,
 Whilst she sat under an estate of lawn
 In night-attire more god-like glittering,
 Than any eye had seen the cheerful dawn,
 Leaning upon her, most loved Mortimer,
 Whose voice, more than the music pleased her ear.

* * * * * *

Her loose hair look'd like gold (O word too base !
 Nay, more than sin, but so to name her hair)
 Declining, as to kiss her fairer face,
 No word is fair enough for thing so fair,
 Nor ever was there epithet could grace
 That by much praising which we much impair ;

And where the pen fails, pencils cannot show it,
 Only the soul may be supposed to know it.
 She laid her fingers on his manly cheek,
 The God's pure scepters and the darts of Love,
 That with their touch might make a tiger meek,
 Or might great Atlas from his seat remove ;
 So white, so soft, so delicate, so sleek,
 As she had worn a lily for a glove ;
 As might beget life where was never none,
 And put a spirit into the hardest stone.
 The fire of precious wood ; the light perfume
 Which left a sweetness on each thing it shone,
 As every thing did to itself assume
 The scent from them, and made the same their own ;
 So that the painted flowers within the room
 Were sweet, as if they naturally had grown ;
 The light gave colors, which upon them fell,
 And to the colors they perfume gave and smell.

* * * * *

When by that time, into the castle hall
 Was rudely enter'd that well armed rout,
 And they within suspecting naught at all
 Had then no guard to watch for them without ;
 See how mischances suddenly do fall
 And steal upon us, being farthest from doubt !
 Our life's uncertain, and our death is sure,
 And towards most peril, man is most secure.
 Whilst youthful Nevil and brave Turrington
 To the bright queen that ever waited near,
 Two with great March credit that had won
 That in the lobby with the ladies were
 Staying, delight whilst time away did run
 With such discourse as women love to hear ;
 Charged on the sudden by the armed train
 Were at their entrance miserably slain.
 When as from snow-crown'd Skidow's lofty cliffs

Some fleet-wing'd haggard, tow'rds her preying hour
 Amongst the teal and moor-bread mallard drives,
 And the air of all her feather'd flock doth scow'r
 Whilst to regain her former height she strives
 The fearful fowl all prostrate to her power,
 Such a sharp shriek did ring throughout the vault
 Made by the women at the fierce assault.

NYMPHIDIA,

THE COURT OF FAIRY.

Old Chaucer doth of Topas tell,
 Mad Rab'lais of Pautagrue,
 A later third of Dowsabel,
 With such poor trifles playing:
 Others the like have labor'd at,
 Some of this thing, and some of that,
 And many of them know not what
 But that they must be saying.

Another sort there be, that will
 Be talking of the Fairies still,
 Nor never can they have their fill,
 As they were wedded to them:
 No tales of them their thirst can slake
 So much delight therein they take
 And some strange thing they fain would make.
 Knew they the way to do them.

Then since no muse hath been so bold,
 Or of the latter or the old -
 Those elvish secrets to unfold,
 Which lie from others reading;
 My active muse to light shall bring
 The court of that proud Fairy King,
 And tell there of the revelling;
 Jove prosper my proceeding.

And thou, Nymphidia, gentle Fay,
 Which meeting me upon the way,
 These secrets didst to me bewray,
 Which now I am in telling:
My pretty, light fantastic maid,
 I here invoke thee to my aid,
 That I may speak what thou hast said
 In numbers softly swelling.

*This palace standeth in the air
 By necromancy placed there,*
 That it no tempests needs to fear
 Which way soe'er it blow it:
 And somewhat southward tow'rd the noon,
 Whence lies a way up to the moon,
 And thence the Fairy can as soon
 Pass to the earth below it.
 The walls of spider's legs were made
 Well morticed and finely laid;
 He was the master of his trade,
 It curiously that builded:
 The windows of the eyes of cats
 And for the roof instead of slats,
 Is covered with the skins of bats,
With moonshine that are gilded.

THE SHEPHERD'S DAFFODIL.

Batte. Gorbo, as thou cam'st this way
 By yonder little hill,
 Or, as thou through the fields did stray
 Saw'st thou my Daffodil?
 She's in a frock of Lincoln green,
 Which color likes her sight
 And never hath her beauty seen
 But through a veil of white,

Than roses richer to behold
That dress up lovers' bowers,
The pansy and the marigold
Through Phœbus' paramours.

Gorbo. Thou well describ'st the Daffodil :
It is not full an hour
Since, by the spring near yonder hill,
I saw that lovely flower.

Batte. Yet my fair thou didst not meet,
Nor news of her didst bring,
And yet my Daffodil's more sweet
Than that by yonder spring.

Gorbo. I saw a shepherd that doth keep
In yonder field of lilies,
Was making, as he fed his sheep,
A wreath of daffodillies.

Batte. Yet, Gorbo, thou delud'st me still,
My flower thou did'st not see,
For know my pretty Daffodil
Is worn of none but me.

Gorbo. Through yonder vale as I did pass
Descending from the hill,
I met a smirking bonny lass,
They call her Daffodil,
Whose presence, as along she went,
The pretty flowers did greet
As though their heads they downward bent,
With homage to her feet ;
And all the shepherds that were nigh
From top of every hill,
Unto the vallies loud did cry,—
There goes sweet Daffodil !

Batte. Aye, gentle shepherd, now with joy
Thou all my flocks dost fill ;
That she's alone, kind shepherd's boy,
Let us to Daffodil.

O D E .

WRITTEN IN THE PEAK.

This while we are abroad,
Shall we not touch our lyre ?
Shall we not sing an Ode ?
Shall that holy fire,
In us that strongly glow'd
In this cold air expire ?

Long since the summer laid
Her lusty brav'ry down
The autumn half is way'd,
And Boreas 'gins to frown,
Since now I did behold,
Great Brute's first builded town.

Though in the utmost Peak
Awhile we do remain,
Amongst the mountains bleak,
Exposed to sleet and rain,
No sport our hours shall break
To exercise our vein.

What though bright Phœbus' beams
Refresh the Southern ground,
And though the princely Thames
With beauteous nymphs abound,
And by old Camber's streams,
Be many wonders found :

Yet many rivers clear,
Here glide in silver swathes,

And what of all most dear,
 Buxton's delicious baths,
 Strong ale and noble cheer,
 T' assuage breem winter's scathes.

Those grim and horrid caves
 Whose looks affright the day,
 Wherein nice Nature saves
 What she would not bewray,
 Our better leisure craves,
 And doth invite our lay.

In places far or near,
 Or famous, or obscure,
 Where wholesome is the air,
 Or where the most impure,
 All times, and everywhere
 The Muse is still in ure.

The ballad of Agincourt has some fine passages :
 the attack between the English and French is thus
 portrayed :

They now to fight are gone,
 Armor on armor shone,
 Drum now to drum did groan,
 To hear was wonder ;
 That with the cries they make,
 The very earth did shake,
 Trumpet to trumpet spake,
Thunder to thunder.

Sir Philip Sydney's fondness for conceit destroyed
 the chasteness and simplicity of his style : but this
 was the effect of habit ; he possesses a poetic temper-
 ament, and, although he was " smitten with the love

of antithesis and conceit," he possesses "great power of thought and description." Cowper calls him

—"The warbler of poetic prose."

Sir W. Temple says that he was "the greatest poet and the noblest genius of any that have left writings behind them, or published in ours or any other language." Raleigh styles him the English Petrarch, and Dr. Johnson seems to think that he is the English model of poetic expression: "If the language of theology were extracted from Hooker and the translation of the Bible; the terms of natural knowledge from Bacon; the phrases of policy, war, and navigation from Raleigh; *the dialect of poetry and fiction from Spenser and Sydney*; and the diction of common life from Shakspeare, few ideas would be lost to mankind, for want of English words in which they might be expressed." "Considered as a poet," says Mr. Ellis, "he was certainly affected with that fondness for conceit and antithesis which the example of the Italian writers had rendered fashionable; but this fault in him was evidently the effect of imitation, not of character; and is often compensated by real wit, and elegance, and facility. His amatory poems are not whining lamentations about the perfection and cruelty of an ideal paragon, but are lively, dramatic, and descriptive of real passion."

- ASTROPHEL AND STELLA.

LOVING in truth, and fain in verse my love to show
 That she, dear she! might take some pleasure of my pain;
 Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
 Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain;
 I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe,
 Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain:
 Oft turning over leaves, to see if thence would flow
 Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sun-burnt brain.
 But words came halting forth, wanting invention's stay:
Invention, nature's child, fled step-dame Study's blows,
 And others' feet still seem'd but strangers in my way.
 Thus, great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes,
 Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite,
 Fool! said my muse to me, *look in thy heart and write.*

S O N N E T .

Because I oft, in dark abstracted guise
 Seem most alone in greatest company;
 With dearth of words, or answers quite awry,
 To them that would make speech of speech arise;
 They deem, and of their doom the rumor flies
 That poison foul of hubbling pride doth lie,
 So in my swelling breast, that only I
 Fawn on myself, and others do despise.
 Yet pride, I think, doth not my soul possess,
 Which looks too oft in his unflatt'ring glass;
 But one worse fault, *ambition*, I confess,
 That makes me oft my best friends overpass,
 Unseen, unheard, while thought to highest place
 Bends all his power, even unto Stella's grace.

S O N G .

In a grove most rich of shade,
 Where birds wanton music made,

May, then young, his pied weeds showing
 New perfum'd with flowers fresh growing:
 Astrophel, with Stella sweet,
 Did for mutual comfort meet;
 Both within themselves oppressed,
 But each in the other blessed.
 Him great harms had taught much care;
 Her fair neck a foul yoke bare:
 But her sight his cares did banish;
 In his sight, her yoke did vanish.
 Wept they had, alas! the while,
 But now tears themselves did smile,
 While their eyes, by love directed,
 Interchangably reflected.
 Sigh they did; but now betwixt
 Sighs of woes, were glad sighs mixt.

* * * * *

Stella! whose voice, when it singeth,
 Angels to acquaintance bringeth;
 Stella, in whose body is
 Writ each character of bliss;
 Whose sweet face all beauty passeth,
 Save thy mind which yet surpasseth;
 Grant—O, grant—but speech, alas,
 Fails me, fearing on to pass!

* * * * *

“Astrophel,” said she, “my love,
 Cease in these effects to prove.
 Now be still: yet still believe me
 Thy grief more than death would grieve me.
 If that any thought in me
 Can taste comfort but of thee;
 Let me, fed with hellish anguish,
 Joyless, hopeless, endless, languish!
 If those eyes you praised, be
 Half so dear as you to me,

Let me home return stark blinded
Of those eyes, and blinder minded !
If to secret of my heart,
I do any wish impart,
Where thou art not foremost placed,
Be both wish and eye defaced.

“If more may be said, I say
All my bliss in thee I lay ;
If thou love, my love, content thee,
For all love, all faith is meant thee.
Trust me while I thee deny,
In myself the smart I try.
Tyrant honor doth thus use thee
Stella's self might not refuse thee.
Therefore, dear ! this no more move,
Lest, though I leave not thy love,
Which too deep in me is framed,
I should blush when thou art named.”

Therewithal away she went,
Leaving him so passion rent
With what she had done and spoken,
That therewith my song is broken.

Sir Walter Raleigh possessed a great variety of talent : he wrote several poems which have much merit. His poems, however, have not been collected, and the authenticity of some ascribed to him, is doubtful ; the same pieces are variously ascribed to him and to Sylvester.

THE SHEPHERD TO THE FLOWERS.

Sweet violets, Love's Paradise, that spread
Your precious odors, which you couched bear

Within your paly faces,
Upon the gentle wing of some calm-breathing wind
That plays amidst the plain !
If, by the favor of propitious stars you gain
Such grace, as in my lady's bosom place you find,
Be proud to touch those places :
And when her warmth your moisture forth doth wear,
Whereby her dainty parts are sweetly fed,
You, honors of the flowery meads, I pray,
You, pretty daughters of the Earth and Sun,
With mild and seemly breathing straight display
My bitter sighs, that have my heart undone !

THE SILENT LOVER.

Passions are liken'd best to floods and streams ;
The shallow murmur but the deep are dumb ;
So, when affections yield discourse, it seems
The bottom is but shallow, whence they come.
They that are rich in words, must needs discover,
They are but poor in that which makes a lover.

Wrong not, sweet mistress of my heart,
The merit of true passion,
With thinking that he feels no smart,
Who sues for no compassion.
Since, if my plaints were not t' approve,
The conquest of thy beauty,
It comes not from defect of love,
But fear t' exceed my duty.
For, knowing that I sue to serve
A saint of such perfection,
As all desire, but none deserve,
A place in her affection ;
I rather choose to want relief,
Than venture the revealing ;
Where glory recommends the grief,

Despair disdains the healing.
 Silence in love betrays more woe
 Than words, though ne'er so witty ;
 A beggar that is dumb, you know,
 May challenge double pity.
 Then wrong not, dearest to my heart,
 My love for secret passion ;
 He smarteth most who hides his smart,
 And sues for no compassion.

A VISION UPON THE FAIRY QUEEN.

Methought I saw the grave where Laura lay,
 Within that temple where the vestal flame,
 Was wont to burn ; and passing by that way
 To see that buried dust of living fame,
 Whose tomb fair Love and fairer Virtue kept,
 All suddenly I saw the Fairy Queen,
 At whose approach the soul of Petrarch wept ;
 And from thenceforth those Graces were not seen,
 For they this Queen attended ; in whose stead
 Oblivion laid him down on Laura's hearse.
 Hereat the hardest stones were seen to bleed,
 And groans of buried ghosts the heavens did pierce,
 Where Homer's sprite did tremble all for grief,
 And cursed th' access of that celestial thief.

VERSES FOUND IN HIS BIBLE.

E'en such is time ; which takes in trust
 Our youth, our joys, and all we have !
 And pays us nought but age and dust,
 Which, in the dark and silent grave,
 When we have wander'd all our ways,
 Shuts up the story of our days.
 And from which grave, and earth, and dust,
 The Lord shall raise me up, I trust.

The works of Sylvester are chiefly translations. His claim to the poem of the Soul's Errand is denied ; there seems to be, however, a resemblance between this and the fragment, *A Contented Mind*, both of which Mr. Ellis has placed in the collection of his poems.

A CONTENTED MIND.

I weigh not Fortune's frown or smile,
I joy not much in earthly joys ;
I seek not state, I reck not style,
I am not fond of fancy's toys ;
 I rest so pleas'd with what I have,
 I wish no more, no more I crave.
I quake not at the thunder's crack,
I tremble not at noise of war,
I swoon not at the news of wrack,
I shrink not at a blazing star :
 I fear not loss, I hope not gain ;
 I envy none, I none disdain.
I see ambition never pleased,
I see some Tantals starv'd in store ;
I see gold's dropsy seldom'd eas'd,
I see e'en Midas gape for more.
 I neither want, nor yet abound :
 Enough's a feast ; content is crown'd.
I feign not friendship where I hate,
I fawn not on the great in show,
I prize, I praise a mean estate,
Neither too lofty nor too low ;
 This, this all my choice, my cheer,
 A mind content, a conscience clear.

THE SOUL'S ERRAND.

Go, soul, the body's guest,
Upon a thankless errand !
Fear not to touch the best,
The truth shall be thy warrant ;
 Go, since I needs must die,
 And give the world the lie.
Go, tell the court it glows
And shines like rotten wood,
Go, tell the church it shows
What's good, and doth no good ;
 If church and court reply,
 Then give them both the lie.
Tell potentates, they live,
Acting by other's actions,
Not lov'd unless they give,
Not strong but by their factions.
 If potentates reply,
 Give potentates the lie.
Tell men of high condition
That rule affairs of state,
Their purpose is ambition,
Their practice only hate.
 And if they once reply,
 Then give them all the lie.
Tell them that brave it most,
They beg for more by spending,
Who in their greatest cost,
Seek nothing but commending.
 And if they make reply,
 Then give them all the lie.
Tell zeal it lacks devotion, ;
Tell love it is but lust,
Tell time it is but motion,
Tell flesh it is but dust ;

And wish them not reply,
For thou must give the lie.
Tell age it daily wasteth,
Tell honor how it alters,
Tell beauty how she blasteth,
Tell favor how she falters ;
And as they shall reply
Give every one the lie.
Tell wit how much it wrangles
In tickle points of niceness :
Tell wisdom she entangles
Herself in over-wiseness ;
And when they do reply,
Straight give them both the lie.
Tell physic of her boldness,
Tell skill it is pretension,
Tell charity of coldness,
Tell law it is contention ;
And as they do reply,
So give them still the lie.
Tell fortune of her blindness,
Tell nature of decay,
Tell friendship of unkindness,
Tell justice of delay ;
And if they will reply,
Then give them all the lie.
Tell arts they have no soundness,
But vary by esteeming,
Tell schools they want profoundness,
And stand too much on seeming ;
If arts and schools reply,
Give arts and schools the lie.
Tell faith it's fled the city,
Tell how the country erreth,
Tell, manhood shakes off pity,
Tell, virtue least preferreth ;

And if they do reply,
Spare not to give the lie.
So when thou hast, as I
Commanded thee, done babbling :
Although to give the lie ;
Deserves no less than stabbing,
Yet stab at thee who will,
No stab the Soul can kill.

WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.

The art of poetry, the gay science, is a most subtle and most delightful sort of writing or composition. It is sweet and pleasurable to those who propound and to those who reply ; to utterers and to hearers. This science, or the wisdom or knowledge dependent on it, can only be possessed, received, and acquired by the inspired spirit of the Lord God ; who communicates it, sends it, and influences by it, those alone, who well and wisely, and discreetly and correctly, can create and arrange, and compose and polish, and scan and measure feet, and pauses and rhymes, and syllables, and accents, by dexterous art, by varied and by novel arrangement of words. And even then, so sublime is the understanding of this art, and so different its attainment, that it can only be learned, possessed, reached, and known to the man who is of noble and of ready invention, elevated and pure discretion, sound and steady judgment ; who has seen, and heard, and read many and divers books and writings ; who understands all languages ; who has, moreover, dwelt in the courts of kings and nobles ; and who has witnessed and practised many heroic feats. Finally, he must

be of high birth, courteous, calm, chivalric, gracious ; he must be polite and graceful ; he must possess honey, and sugar, and salt, and facility and gayety in his discourse.

ALFONSO DE BAENA.

We have reserved this passage, as the most appropriate illustration of the genius of Shakspeare,—Shakspeare, whose august name we tremble to pronounce, but which cannot be omitted without leaving a *chasm* in the history of the English language and literature. He has had already, enough “loads of learning deliv'd on his back” to crush an ordinary genius. There is no element of human genius but what has been ascribed to him, and each, and all in perfection. He surpassed all his predecessors and contemporaries in the knowledge of human character, and for truthfulness in his delineations, he ranks next to the Bible. “There is nothing wanting either to the fancy or the imagination of Shakspeare,” and these are no more rich and felicitous, than his judgment is just, and his perception of the beautiful, delicate and true. “He is equal to the greatest poets in grandeur of imagination ; to all in diversity of it ; to all in fancy ; to all in every thing else, except in a certain *primeval intensity* :” and it is his *intensity* more than any thing else that immortalized him. His deep feeling, his universal sympathy for humanity, more than his fancy, his imagination or his judgment, made him the teacher and the companion of all future time.

Theorize as we may, the fact is indisputable, that by far the most beautiful specimens of the earliest po-

ets, those that embalmed the language in which they were conceived, and survived their time, are those of the passions; and the early collections of this kind are objectionable because they "consisted almost exclusively of love-songs and sonnets." Nature alone is permanent, and the whole secret of the immortality of thought is disclosed in the precept that; 'Time effaces the fictions of opinion, but confirms the *determinations* of nature.

But poetry to be permanent, must, in a great measure, be independent of this world; it must rise above the real, into the ideal world, and make the creations of the imagination instinct with natural feeling; then the changes of manners and the lapse of time, cannot deeply affect or destroy it; and it never ceases its hold upon the human affections, for "its source is nature, it acts on nature, and it may survive as long 'as nature continues."

Shakspeare's fancy is playful and full of grace; his imagination is "rich and lofty," and his knowledge of human nature is almost boundless, but there is something besides all this that has given him his distinction, and secured to him the communion of the world of mind. It is his *feeling* that gives to him the power of withdrawing us from our senses, so that for the moment the past, the future, and the distant prevail over the present. Without this, his imagination, like the winter's sky, would appear as much colder as it is clearer than that of common minds.

He is familiar with all beautiful forms; he is delicately sensible to "the indescribable charm of flowers,"

of odors, of dews and bright waters ;" he is alive to all that is beautiful and grand in art, to all that is sweet and majestic in nature, in sounds, sweet airs, starry nights, and moonlit bowers, which form so much of the frame-work of poetry : and all the possible forms and combinations of human nature are present to his mind, yet it is the fine sense of their relation to mental emotion, to the affections, which is the essential of poetry, that gives him such unlimited power over the human soul. His genius falls like gleams of sunshine on the human heart, and he delights at the same time that he instructs.

In his delineations of character he represents all the possible combinations of human nature, and omits no trait, however delicate ; in his paintings of nature his words reflect its hues and breathe its very spirit.

Such is the interest excited in the story of Shakspeare's plays, that the attention never flags for a moment.

His characters are drawn with so much feeling, that they are poetic in the highest degree, though portrayed in the simplest language. The conduct of the unhappy Lear is founded entirely upon the impulses of sensibility : when he discovers the treachery of those in whom he had relied, and cherished with so much fondness and expectation, he despairs, and is bereft of every source of consolation ; cast out with utter coldness and contempt by his inhuman daughters, for whom he had stripped himself of dignity and power, and in whom he had centered every hope of comfort and repose ; and tortured with the reflection of having

deserted the only child that loved him, he is driven to distraction. The development of the scene of this dreadful affliction had evinced the poet's intimate knowledge of the workings of the human mind under all its aberrations, wrought up under the most intense feeling, had he written only this. The fallen monarch exhibits the spectacle of a great mind in ruins: his passion is terrible as a volcano, while the sweet spirit of Cordelia mellows the scene with an angel-light.

Fool. That lord that counsel'd thee
To give away thy land,
Come, place him here by me,—
Or do thou for him stand:
The sweet and bitter fool
Will presently appear;
The one in motley here—
The other found out there.

Physician. So please your majesty,
That we may wake the King? he hath slept long.

Cordelia. Be governed by your knowledge, and proceed
I' the sway of your own will. Is he arrayed?

Gentleman. Ay, madam; *in the heaviness of his sleep,*
We put fresh garments on him.

Phys. Be by, good madam, when we do awake him;
I doubt not of his temperance.

Cor. Very well.

Phys. Please you draw near.—Louder the music there.

Cor. Oh, my dear father! Restoration, hang
Thy medicine upon my lips; *and let this kiss*
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made!

Kent. Kind and dear princess!

Cor. Had you not been their father, *these white flakes*
Had challenged pity of them. Was this a face
 To be exposed against the warring winds?
 To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?
In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick cross lightning?

Mine enemy's dog,
 Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
 Against my fire. And wast thou fain, poor father
 To hovel thee with swine and rogues forlorn
 In short and musty straw? Alack! Alack!
 'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once
 Had not concluded all. *He wakes: speak to him.*

Phys. Madam do you; 'tis fittest.

Cor. How does my royal lord? How fares your majesty?

Lear. *You do me wrong to take me out o' the grave:—*
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.

Cor. Sir, do you know me?

Lear. *You are a spirit, I know: when did you die?*

Cor. Still, still far wide!

Phys. He's scarce awake; let him alone awhile.

Lear. Where have I been? Where am I? Fair daylight?
 I am mightily abused. I know not what to say,
 I will not swear these are my hands:—let's see;—
 I feel this pin prick. 'Would I were assured
 Of my condition.

Cor. O, look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me.
 No, sir you must not kneel.

Lear. Pray do not mock me;
 I am a very foolish, fond old man,
 Fourscore and upward; and to deal plainly,
 I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
 Methinks I should know you, and know this man:
 Yet I am doubtful: for I am mainly ignorant

What place this is, and all the skill I have,
Remembers not these garments ; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me :
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child *Cordelia*.

Cor.

And so I am, I am.

This whole scene is poetry as perfect as fancy and pathos can make it. The passage referring to the storm is also, in the highest degree, sublime :

Was this a face
To be exposed against the warring winds ?
To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder ?
*In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick cross lightning.*

It is said, with as much truth as beauty, that these lines might have been struck out by the flash itself : no dislocation can break the charm of these simple words ; they are breathed from a soul as tremblingly sensitive to the mild influences of nature, as to the flash of lightning.

MUSIC AND MOONLIGHT.

The Lovers, Lorenzo and Jessica, discourse of the Night and Music, and welcome the return home of Portia and Nerissa.

Lor. *The moon shines bright* :—In such a night as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
And they did make no noise : in such a night
Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan walls
And sighed his soul towards the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night.

Jes. *In such a night,*
 Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip :
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,
 And ran dismayed away.

Lor. *In such a night*
 Stood Dido, with a willow in her hand,
 Upon the wild sea-banks *and waved her love*
 To come again to Carthage.

Jes. *In such a night*
 Medea gathered the enchanted herbs
 That did renew old Æson.

Lor. *In such a night*
 Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew:
 And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
 As far as Belmont.

Jes. *In such a night*
 Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well ;
 Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
 And ne'er a true one.

Lor. *In such a night*
 Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
 Slander her love, *and he forgave it her.*

Jes. I would out-night you, did nobody come.
 But hark ! I hear the footing of a man.

Enter STEPHANO.

Lor. Who comes so fast in silence of the night ?

Steph. A friend.

Lor. A friend ? What friend ? Your name, I pray
 you, friend ?

Steph. Stephano is my name ; and I bring word,
 My mistress will before the break of day,
 Be here at Belmont. She doth stray about
 By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays
 For happy wedlock hours.

Lor. Who comes with her ?

Steph. None but a holy hermit and her maid ;

I pray you, is my master yet return'd ?

Lor. He is not, now we have not heard from him—
But go we in, I pray thee Jessica,
And ceremoniously let us prepare
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

* * * * *

Lor. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.
And yet no matter ;—Why should we go in ?
My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you
Within the house, your mistress is at hand ;
And bring your music forth into the air.—

Exit STEPHANO.

*How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank !
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep into our ears ; soft stillness and the night,
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica : look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold ;
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st,
But in her motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims :
Such harmony is in immortal souls ;
But, while this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close us in, we cannot hear it.—*

Enter MUSICIANS.

Come, ho, and wake Diana with a hymn :
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,
And draw her home with music. [*Music.*]

Jes. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

Lor. The reason is, your spirits are attentive :
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood ;
If they but hear perchance, a trumpet sound,

Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods,
 Since naught so stockish, hard and full of rage,
 Or any air of music touch their ears,
 You shall perceive them make a mutual stand—
*Their savage eyes turned to a modest gaze
 By the sweet power of music:*—Therefore the poet
But music for the time doth change his nature:
*The man that hath no music in himself,
 Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
 Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils ;
 The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
 And his affections dark as Erebus,
 Let no such man be trusted.*—Mark the music.

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA, at a distance.

Por. That light we see is burning in my hall ;
*How far that little candle throws his beams !
 So shines a good deed in a naughty world.*

Ner. When the moon shone we did not see the candle.

Por. So doth the greater glory dim the less :
 A substitute shines brightly as a king,
 Until a king be by ; and then his state
 Empties itself, as doth an inland brook
 Into the main of waters. Music ! hark !

Ner. It is your music, madam, of the house.

Por. Nothing is good I see without respect ;
 Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.

Ner. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

Por. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark,
 When neither is attended ; and, I think
 The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
 When every goose is cackling, would be thought
 No better a musician than the wren.
 How many things by season, season'd are,
 To their right praise and true perfection !
 Peace, ho ! the moon sleeps with Endymion,
 And would not be awak'd ! *[Music ceases.]*

Lor. That is the voice
Or I am much deceived, of Portia.

Por. He knows me, as the blind man knows the cuckoo,
By the bad voice.

Lor. Dear lady, welcome home.

GALLERY OF BEAUTY.

For where is any author in the world
Teaches such beauty as a woman's eye.

Love's Labor Lost, Act iv. sc. iii.

The attempt to paint Shakspeare's Beauties, has failed ; they are spiritual beings, and are known only by the effect they have upon the spirit. Their characteristics consist in the capability of acting to perfection the part which they are introduced to play. The poet portrays a few features, leaving the rest to the imagination of the reader, so that it is as impossible to reproduce his characters with the pencil, as it is to act his plays on the stage, so as to realize the conceptions formed of them in the closet. Woman, in Shakspeare's plays, is conditioned much like *UNA*, or *Truth*, in the *Fairy Queen* ; she does not accelerate the *action*, but her fate is generally involved in the result of it.

MIRANDA.

Ferdinand. Admir'd Miranda !
Indeed the top of admiration ; worth
What's dearest to the world ! Full many a lady
I have ey'd with best regard : and many a time
The harmony of their tongues hath into bondage
Brought my too diligent ear : for several virtues
Have I liked several women ; never any
With so full soul, but some defect in her

Did quarrel with the noblest grace she own'd,
 And put it to the foil: but you, O you,
 So perfect and so peerless, are created
 Of every creature's best.

Mira. I do not know
 One of my sex; no woman's face remember,
 Save, from my glass, mine own; nor have I seen
 More that I may call men, than you, good friend,
 And my dear father: how features are abroad,
 I am skill-less of; but by my modesty,
 (The jewel in my dower,) I would not wish
 Any companion in the world but you:
 Nor can imagination form a shape
 Besides yourself, to like of: but I prattle
 Something too wildly, and my father's precepts,
 I therein do forget.

SONG.

Juno. Honor, riches, marriage blessing,
 Long continuance, and increasing,
 Hourly joys be still upon you!
Juno sings her blessings on you.

Ceres. Earth's increase, and foison plenty;
 Barns and garners never empty;
 Vines with clust'ring bunches growing;
 Plants with goodly burden bowing;
 Spring come to you, at the farthest,
 In the very hand of harvest!
 Scarcity and want shall shun you;
Ceres' blessing so is on you.

JULIA.

Proteus. Sweet love! sweet lines! sweet life!
 Here is her hand, the agent of her heart:
 Here is her oath for love, her honor's pawn;

O, that our fathers would applaud our loves,
To seal our happiness with their consents !
O heavenly Julia !

SILVIA.

Pro. Enough ; I read your fortune in your eye :
Was this the idol that you worship so ?

Valentine. Even she ; and is she not a heavenly saint ?

Pro. No, but she's an earthly paragon.

Val. Call her divine.

Pro. I will not flatter her.

Val. O, flatter me ; for love delights in praises.

Pro. When I was sick, you gave me bitter pills ;
And I must minister the like to you.

Val. Then speak the truth by her ; if not divine,
Yet let her be a principality,
Sovereign to all the creatures on the earth.

Pro. Except my mistress.

Val. Sweet, except not any,
Except thou wilt except against my love.

Pro. Have I not reason to prefer mine own ?

Val. And I will help thee to prefer her too ;
She shall be dignified with this high honor,—
To bear my lady's train ; lest the base earth
Should from her vesture chance to steal a kiss,
And, of so great a favor growing proud,
Disdain to root the summer-smelling flower,
And make rough winter everlastingly.

Pro. Why, Valentine what braggardism is this ?

Val. Pardon me, Proteus : all I can is nothing
To her whose worth makes other worthies nothing ;
She is alone.

Pro. Then let her alone.

Val. Not for the world : why man, she is mine own ;
And I as rich in having such a jewel,
As twenty seas, if all their sands were pearl,
The water nectar and the rocks pure gold.

S O N G .

Who is Silvia ? what is she ?
That all our swains commend her ?
Holy, fair and wise is she ;
The heavens such grace did lend her,
That she might admir'd be.

Is she kind, as she is fair ?
For beauty lives with kindness :
Love doth to her eyes repair
To help him of his blindness ;
And, being helped, inhabits there.

Then to Silvia let us sing
That Silvia is excelling ;
She excels each mortal thing
Upon the dull earth dwelling :
To her let us garlands bring.

O L I V I A .

Duke. If music be the food of love, play on,
Give me excess of it ; that surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.—
That strain again ;—it had a dying fall :
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet south,
That breathes upon a bank of violets
Stealing and giving odor.—Enough, no more,
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.
O spirit of love, how quick and fresh art thou !
That notwithstanding thy capacity,
Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there
Of what validity and pitch soever,
But falls into abatement and low price,
Even in a minute ! so full of shapes is fancy,

That it alone is high-fantastical.

Curio. Will you go hunt, my lord ?

Duke. What, Curio ?

Curio. The hart.

Duke. Why, so I do the noblest that I have :
O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first,
Methought she purged the air of pestilence ;
That instant was I turned into a hart ;
And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,
E'er since pursue me.—How now ? what news from her ?

Enter VALENTINE.

Val. So please my lord, I might not be admitted,
But from her handmaid to return this answer.
The element itself, till seven years heat
Shall not behold her face at ample view ;
But like a cloistress, she will veiled walk,
And water once a day her chamber round
With eye-offending brine ; all this to season
A brother's dead love, which she would keep fresh,
And lasting in her sad remembrance.

Duke. O, she, that hath a heart of that fine frame,
To pay this debt of love but to a brother,
How will she love, when the rich golden shaft
Hath kill'd the flock of all affections else
That live in her ! when liver, brain, and heart,
Those sovereign thrones are all supplied and fill'd
(Her sweet perfections) with one self king !
Away before me to sweet beds of flowers ;
Love-thoughts lie rich, when canopied with bowers.

S O N G .

Clo. O mistress mine, where are you roaming ?
O, stay and hear ; your true love's coming ;
That can sing both high and low :
Trip it no further, pretty sweeting ;

Journey's end in lover's meeting,
 Every wise man's son doth know.
 What is love ? 'tis not hereafter ;
 Present mirth hath present laughter ;
 What's to come is still unsure ;
 In delay there lies no plenty ;
 Then come kiss me, sweet-and-twenty ;
 Youth's a stuff will not endure.

S O N G .

Cl. Come away, come away, death,
 And in sad cypress let me be laid ;
 Fly away, fly away, breath ;
 I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
 My shroud of white, stuck all with yew
 O, prepare it ;
 My part of death, no one so true
 Did share it.
 Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
 On my black coffin let there be strown ;
 Not a friend, not a friend, greet
 My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown :
 A thousand thousand sighs to save.
 Lay me, O, where
 Sad true lover never find my grave,
 To weep there.

P O R T I A .

Bassanio. What find I here ?
 Fair Portia's counterfeit ? What demi-god
 Hath come so near creation ? Move these eyes ?
 Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
 Seem they in motion ? Here are sever'd lips
 Parted with sugar breath ; so sweet a bar
 Should sunder such sweet friends : Here in her hairs

The painter plays the spider; and hath woven
 A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men,
 Faster than gnats in cobwebs: But her eyes,—
 How could he see to do them? having made one
 Methinks it should have power to steal both his,
 And leave itself unfurnish'd: Yet look, how far
 The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow
 In underprizing it, so far this shadow
 Doth limp behind the substance.

S O N G .

Tell me, where is fancy bred,
 Or in the heart, or in the head?
 How begot, how nourished?
 Reply, reply.

It is engender'd in the eyes,
 With gazing fed; and fancy dies
 In the cradle where it lies;
 Let us all ring fancy's knell,
 I'll begin it,—Ding, dong, bell,
All, Ding, dong, bell,

J U L I E T .

Romeo. What lady's that which doth enrich the hand
 Of yonder knight?

Serv. I know not, sir.

Romeo. O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright,
 It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
 Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear:
 Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!
 So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,
 As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows,
 The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand,
 And, touching hers, make happy my rude hand.
 Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight!
 For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

C H O R U S .

Now old desire doth in his death-bed lie,
 And young affection gaps to be his heir ;
 That fair, which love groan'd for, and would die,
 With tender Juliet matched is now not fair.
 Now Romeo is belov'd and loves again,
 Alike bewitched by the charm of looks ;
 But to his foe suppos'd he must complain,
 And she steal love's sweet bait from fearful hooks ;
 Being held a foe, he may not have access
 To breathe such vows as lovers use to swear :
 And she as much in love, her means much less
 To meet her new-beloved any where :
 But passion lends them power, time means to meet,
 Temp'ring extremities with extreme sweet.

O P H E L I A .

Pol. Farewell ! How now, Ophelia ? what's the matter ?
Oph. O my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted !
Pol. With what, in the name of heaven ?
Oph. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
 Lord Hamlet,—with his doublet all unbrac'd ;
 No hat upon his head ; his stockings foul'd,
 Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle ;
 Pale as his shirt ; his knees knocking each other ;
 And with a look so piteous in purport,
 As if he had been loosed out of hell,
 To speak of horrors,—he comes before me.
Pol. Mad for thy love ?
Oph. My lord I do not know ;
 But truly I do fear it.
Pol. What said he ?
Oph. He took me by the wrist, and held me hard ;
 Then goes he to the length of all his arm ;
 And with his other hand *thus o'er his brow*,

He falls to such perusal of my face,
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so ;
At last,—a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,—
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound,
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk,
And end his being: that done, he lets me go :
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes ;
For out o' doors he went without their help.
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

SONG.

Doubt thou the stars are fire,
Doubt, that the sun doth move,
Doubt truth to be a liar ;
But never doubt I love.

S O N G .

Oph. And will he not come again?
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead,
Go to thy death-bed,
He never will come again.
His beard was as white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll:
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away mean;
God 'a mercy on his soul!

DESDEMONA.

Oth. O, my fair warrior!

Des. My dear Othello !

Oth. It gives me wonder great as my content

To see you here before me. O my soul's joy!
 If after every tempest comes such calms,
 May the winds blow till they have waken'd death!
 And let the laboring bark climb hills of seas
 Olympus-high; and duck again as low
 As hell's from heaven! If it were now to die
 'Twere now to be most happy; for I fear,
 My soul hath her content so absolute,
 That not another comfort like to this
 Succeeds in unknown fate.

Des. The heavens forbid
 But that our loves and comforts should increase
 Even as our days do grow!

Oth. Amen to that, sweet powers!
 I cannot speak enough of this content,
 It stops me here; it is too much of joy:
 And this, and this, the greatest discords be,
 That o'er our hearts shall make!

Iago. O, you are well tun'd now!
 But I'll set down the pegs that make this music;
 As honest as I am. *[Aside.]*

Oth. Come, let's to the castle.—
 News, friends: our wars are done, the Turks are drown'd.
 How do our old acquaintance of this isle?
 Honey, you shall be well desir'd in Cyprus,
 I have found great love amongst them. O my sweet,
 I prattle out of fashion, and I dote
 In mine own comforts. I pr'ythee, good Iago,
 Go to the bay, and disembark my coffers:
 Bring thou the master to the citadel;
 He is a good one, and his worthiness
 Does challenge much respect. Come Desdemona,
 Once more well met at Cyprus.

S O N G.

Des. The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
Sing all a green willow ; [Singing.
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
Sing willow, willow, willow :
The fresh streams ran by her, and murmured her moans ;
Sing willow, willow, willow ;
Her salt tears fell from her and softened the stones,
Sing willow, willow, willow ;
Sing all a green willow must be my garland.

ARIEL'S SONG.

FROM THE TEMPEST.

Ariel invisible, singing and playing. Ferdinand following him.

Fer. Where should this music be ? i' the air, or the earth ?
It sounds no more ;—and sure, it waits upon
Some god of the island. Sitting on a bank,
Weeping again the king my father's wreck,
*This music crept by me upon the waters ;
Allaying both their fury and my passion,
With its sweet air : thence I have followed it
Or it hath drawn me rather :—But 'tis gone.
No, it begins again.*

[**ARIEL** *sings.*

Full fathom five thy father lies ;
Of his bones are coral made ;
Those are pearls that were his eyes :
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell :
Hark ! now I hear them—ding-dong, bell,
[*Burden, ding-dong.*

S O N G .

Ariel. Where the bee sucks, there lurk I ;
In a cowslip's bell I lie :
There I couch when owls do cry.
On the bat's back I do fly,
After summer, merrily :
Merrily, merrily, shall I live now,
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

S O N G .

FROM AS YOU LIKE IT. 1

Amiens. Under the green-wood tree,
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note,
Unto the sweet bird's throat.
Come hither, come hither, come hither ;
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither ;
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather.

S O N G .

Blow, blow, thou winter wind, '
Thou art not so unkind,
As man's ingratitude !

Thy tooth is not so keen,
 Because thou art not seen,
 Although thy breath be rude.
 Heigh, ho ! sing, heigh, ho ! unto the green holly !
 Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly !
 Then heigh, ho, the holly !
 This life is most jolly.

II.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
 That dost not bite so nigh
 As benefits forgot !
 Though thou the waters warp,
 Thy sting is not so sharp,
 As friend remembered not.

SONNET.

O how much more doth beauty beauteous seem,
 By that sweet ornament which truth doth give !
 The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
 For that sweet odor which doth in it live.
 The canker-blooms have full as deep a die,
 As the perfumed tincture of the roses,
 Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly
 When summer's breath their masked buds discloses :
 But for their virtue only is their show ;
 They live unwoo'd and unrespected fade ;
 Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so ;
 Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odors made :
 And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
 When that shall fade, my verse distils your truth.

JONSON, BEAUMONT, AND FLETCHER.

It has become the custom, established almost by universal consent, to deplore the faults of these men as writers, rather than to admire their beauties. Jonson had "too much learning," or made too great a display of it; and Beaumont and Fletcher should have written "poems instead of tragedies." Criticism has become so keen as to perceive "a coarseness" in the "very refinement" of Jonson: it has become prophetic also; had Beaumont and Fletcher been born a little earlier, and been the playmates of Shakspeare, he would have "rectified the refined spirits of the young gentlemen, and saved their Hippocrene from becoming ditch-water."

There is a finish and an elegance about the works of Jonson that surpass all his predecessors: the fitness, the beauty, of his language ally him to a later age. His comic powers have never been surpassed: his *Volpone* places him at the head of English comedy: that his masques and odes have contributed to the dignity and luster of Milton's muse, is a sufficient attestation of his fancy and elegance: his address to

Cynthia, and the character of Celia, show that he is not destitute of feeling, of tenderness.

VOLPONE.

Volpone devises the plan of cheating his visitants, who bring him presents, with the expectation of being his heir.

Vol. Hold thee, Mosca, [*gives him money.*]
 Take of my hand: thou strikest on truth in all,
 And they are envious, term the parasite.
 Call forth my dwarf, my eunuch, and my fool,
 And let them make me sport. [*Exit Mos.*] What should
 I do,
 But cocker up my genius, and live free
 To all delights my fortune calls me to?
 I have no wife, no parent, child, ally,
 To give my substance to; but whom I make
 Must be my heir: *and this makes men observe me:*
 This draws new clients daily to my house,
 Women and men, of every sex and age,
 That bring me presents, send me plate, coin, jewels,
 With hope that when I die, (which they expect
 Each greedy minute,) it shall then return
 Ten-fold upon them; whilst some, covetous
 Above the rest, seek to engross me whole,
 And counterwork the one unto the other,
 Contend in gifts, as they would seem in love:
 All which I suffer, *playing with their hopes,*
 And am content to coin them into profit,
 And look upon their kindness, and take more,
 And look on that; still bearing them in hand,
 Letting the cherry knock against their lips,
 And draw it by their mouths, and back again.

* * * * *

Volpone makes love to Celia.

Volp. See, behold,
 What thou art queen of; *not in expectation,*

As I feed others, but possess'd and crown'd.
See here, a rope of pearl ; and each more orient,
Than that the brave Ægyptian queen caroused:
Dissolve and drink them. See, a carbuncle,
May put out both the eyes of our St. Mark :
A diamond would have bought Lollier Pauliner,
When she came in like star-light, hid with jewels,
That were the spoils of provinces ; take these,
And wear and lose them ; yet remains an ear-ring
To purchase them again, and this whole state.
A gem, but worth a private matrimony,
Is nothing : we will eat such at a meal.
The heads of parrots, tongues of nightingales,
The brains of peacocks, and of ostriches,
Shall be our food : and could we get the phœnix,
Though nature lost her kind, she were our dish.

Cel. Good sir, these things might move a mind affected
With such delights ; but I, whose innocence
Is all I can think wealthy, or worth th' enjoying,
And which once lost, I have naught to lose beyond it,
Cannot be taken with these sensual baits :
If you have conscience——

Volp. 'Tis the beggar's virtue :
If thou had wisdom, hear me, Celia.
Thy baths shall be the juice of July flowers,
Spirit of roses and of violets,
The milk of unicorns, and panther's breath,
Gather'd in bags, and mixt with Cretan wines.
Our drink shall be prepared gold and amber,
Which we will take, until my roof whirl round
With the vertigo : and my dwarf shall dance,
My eunuch sing, my fool make up the antic ;
Whilst we, in changed shape, act Ovid's tales ;
Thou, like Europa now, and I like Jove ;
Then I like Mars, and thou like Erycine :
So, of the rest, till we have quite run through
And wearied all the fables of the gods,

TO CYNTHIA.

QUEEN and huntress, chaste and fair,
 Now the sun is laid to sleep;
 Seated in thy silver chair,
 State in wonted manner keep:
 Hesperus entreats thy light,
 Goddess, excellently bright.
 Earth, let not thy envious shade
 Dare itself to interpose;
 Cynthia's shining orb was made
 Heaven to clear, when day did close;
 Bless us, then, with wished sight,
 Goddess, excellently bright.
 Lay thy bow of pearl apart,
 And thy crystal shining quiver,
Give unto the flying hart
Space to breathe, how short soever:
 Thou that makest day of night,
 Goddess, excellently bright.

ON LUCY,

COUNTESS OF BEDFORD.

This morning, timely rapt with holy fire,
 I thought to form unto my zealous muse,
 What kind of creature I could most desire,
 To honor, serve, and love, as poets use;
 I meant to make her fair, and free, and wise,
 Of greatest blood, and yet more good than great;
 I meant the day-star should not brighter rise,
 Nor lend like influence from his lucent seat.
 I meant she should be courteous, facile, sweet,
 Hating that solemn vice of greatness, pride;
 I meant each softest virtue there should meet,
 Fit in that softer bosom to reside.

Only a learned, and a manly soul
 I purposed her; that should, with even pow'rs,
 The rock, the spindle, and the sheers control
 Of Destiny, and spin her own free hours.
 Such, when I meant to feign, and wish'd to see,
 My muse bade, Bedford write, and that was she!

MASQUE OF BEAUTY.

SONG.

So Beauty on the waters stood,
 When Love had sever'd earth from flood!
 So, when he parted air from fire,
 He did with concord all inspire!
 And then a motion he them taught,
 That elder than himself was thought.
 Which thought was yet, the child of Earth,
 For Love is elder than his birth.

Beaumont and Fletcher were united by friendship, and by congenial genius, and their names ought not to be separated; "twinning in genius, worth, and wit, so lovely and pleasant in their lives, after death, let not their fame be ever again divided." They were associates of Jonson; and each was animated by the other's genius, as Beaumont's Letter to Jonson testifies:

—— For wit is like a rest,
 Held up at tennis, which men do the best
 With the best gamesters. What things have we seen
 Done at the Mermaid! heard words, that have been
 So nimble, and so full of subtle flame,
 As if that every one from whence they came
 Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
 And had resolved to live a fool the rest
 Of his dull life:——

The Mermaid was the chief place of resort for the wits of the Jonsonian school; and Shakspeare and Donne visited them there. Seward says, referring to this place; "And now, reader, when thou art fired into rage, or melted into pity by their tragic scenes, charmed with the genteel elegance, or bursting into laughter at their comic humor, canst thou not drop the intervening ages, steal into Jonson, Beaumont, and Fletcher's club-room at the Mermaid, on a night when Shakspeare, Donne, and others visited them, and there join in society with as great wits as ever this nation, or perhaps as great as Greece or Rome could at any one time boast? Where, animated each by the other's presence, they even excelled themselves."

Fletcher was gay and graceful: and Beaumont was grave and manly, and they both possessed original and creative genius. "Humor," says Dryden, "which Ben Jonson derived from particular persons, they made it not their business to describe; they represented all the passions very lively, but above all, *love*." "I am apt to believe," he continues, "the English language in them arrived to its highest perfection; what words have since been taken in are rather superfluous than necessary."

They stand in rank, between Shakspeare and Jonson: they have not the fire, the enthusiasm, the terror of the former, but they exhibit more of the graces of poetry than the latter: they do not reach the immortal flight of Shakspeare, but they soar with more ease and to sublimer heights than Jonson. Beaumont was superior in taste and judgment, and Fletcher, in wit and imagination.

THE KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE

SONG.

'Tis mirth that fills the veins with blood
 More than wine, or sleep, or food ;
 Let each man keep his heart at ease,
 No man dies of that disease.
 He that would his body keep
 From diseases, *must not keep ;*
But whoever laughs and sings,
 Never he his body brings
 Into fevers, gouts, or rheuma,
 Or ling'ringly his lungs consumes ;
 Or meets with aches in the bone,
 Or catarrhs, or griping stone :
 But contented lives for aye ;
 The more he laughs, the more he may.

S O N G .

Tell me, dearest, what is love ?
 "'Tis a lightning from above ;
 'Tis an arrow, 'tis a fire,
 'Tis a boy, they call Desire.
 'Tis a smile
 Doth beguile,"
 The poor hearts of men that prove.

Tell me more, are women true ?—
 "Some love change, and so do you."
 Are they fair, and never kind ?
 "Yes, when men turn with the wind."
 Are they froward ?
 "Ever toward
 Those that love, to love anew."

Tell me more yet, can they grieve ?

“ Yes, and sicken sore, but live,”

And be wise and delay ?

“ When you men are as wise as they :”

Then I see

Faith will be

Never till they both believe.

S O N G .

Come, you whose loves are dead,

And whiles I sing,

Weep and wring

Every hand ; and every head

Bind with cypress and sad yew ;

Ribbons black and candles blue,

For him that was of men most true !

Come with heavy moaning,

And on his grave

Let him have

Sacrifice of sighs and groaning ;

Let him have fair flowers enow,

White and purple, green and yellow,

For him that was of men most true !

S O N G .

I would not be a serving-man

To carry the cloak-bag still,

Nor would I be a falconer

The greedy hawks to fill ;

But I would be in a good house,

And have a good master too ;

But I would eat and drink of the best,

And no work would I do.

For Jillian of Berry she dwells on a hill,

And she hath good beer and ale to sell,

And of good fellows she thinks no ill,
 And thither will we go now, now, now,
 And thither will we go now.

And when you have made a little stay,
 You need not ask what is to pay,
 But kiss your hostess, and go your way,
 And thither will we go now, now, now,
 And thither will we go now.

MELANCHOLY.

BY BEAUMONT.

Hence, all you vain delights,
 As short as are the nights
 Wherein you spend your folly ;
 There's naught in this life sweet,
 Were men but wise to see 't,
 But only Melancholy ;
 O sweetest Melancholy !

Welcome, folded arms and fixed eyes ;
 A sigh, that piercing, mortifies ;
 A look that's fasten'd to the ground ;
 A tongue chain'd up without a sound.

Fountain heads and pathless groves,
 Places which pale passion loves ;
 Moonlight walks, when all the fowls
 Are warmly hous'd save bats and owls ;
 A midnight bell, a parting groan,
 These are the sounds we feed upon !
 Then stretch our bones in a still gloomy valley :
 Nothing so dainty sweet as lovely Melancholy.

FROM THE FAITHFUL SHEPHERDESS.

BY FLETCHER.

Satyr. Through yon same bending plain
That flings his arms down to the main,
And thro' these thick woods have I run,
Whose bottom never kiss'd the sun
Since the lusty spring began,
All to please my master Pan,
Have I trotted without rest
To get him fruit: for at a feast
He entertains, this coming night,
His paramour, the Syrinx bright.
But, behold a fairer sight!
By that heav'nly form of thine,
Brightest fair, thou art divine,
Sprung from great immortal race
Of the gods; for in thy face
Shines more awful majesty,
Than dull weak mortality
Dare with misty eyes behold,
And live! Therefore on this mould,
Lowly do I bend my knee,
In worship of thy deity.
Deign it, goddess, from my hand,
To receive whate'er this land
From her fertile womb doth send
Of her choice fruits; and but lend
Belief to that the Satyr tells:
Fairer by the famous wells,
To this present day ne'er grew
Never better nor more true.
Here be grapes, whose lusty blood
Is the learned poets' good,
Sweeter yet did never crown

The head of Bacchus ; nuts more brown
 Than the squirrel whose teeth crack 'em ;
 Deign, oh, fairest fair, to take 'em.
 For these black-ey'd Driope
 Hath often-times commanded me
 With my clasped knee to clime :
 See how well the lusty time
 Hath deck'd their rising cheeks in red,
 Such as on your lips is spread.
 Here be berries for a queen,
 Some be red, some be green ;
 These are of that luscious meat,
 The great God Pan himself doth eat :
 All these, and what the woods can yield,
 The hanging mountain, or the field,
 I freely offer, and ere long
 Will bring you more, more sweet and strong ;
 Till when humbly leave I take,
 Lest the great Pan do awake,
 That sleeping lies in a deep glade,
 Under a broad beech's shade :
 I must go, I must run
 Swifter than the fiery-sun.

River God. What powerful charms my streams do
 Back again unto their spring, [bring
 With such force, that I their God,
 Three times striking with my rod,
 Could not keep them in their ranks !
 My fishes shoot into the banks ;
 There's not one that stays and feeds,
 All have hid them in the weeds.
 Here's a mortal almost dead,
 Fall'n into my river-head,
 Hallow'd so with many a spell,
 That till now none ever fell.
 'Tis a female young and clear,

Cast in by some ravisher.
 See upon her breast a wound,
 On which there is no plaister bound,
 Yet she's warm, her pulses beat,
 'Tis a sign of life and heat,
 If thou be'st a virgin pure,
 I can give a present cure :
 Take a drop into thy wound,
 From my watery locks, more round
 Than orient pearl, and far more pure
 Than unchaste flesh may endure.
 See, she pants, and from her flesh
 The warm blood gusheth out afresh.
 She is an unpolluted maid ;
 I must have this bleeding staid.
 From my banks I pluck this flow'r
 With holy hand, whose virtuous pow'r
 Is at once to heal and draw.
 The blood returns. I never saw
 A fairer mortal. Now doth break
 Her deadly slumber: Virgin, speak. [breath,
Amo. Who hath restor'd my sense, giv'n me new
 And brought me back out of the arms of death ?
God. I have heal'd thy wounds.
Amo. Ah me !
God. Fear not him that succor'd thee :
 I am this fountain's God ! Below
 My waters to a river grow,
 And 'twixt two banks with osiers set,
 That only prosper in the wet,
 Thro' the meadows do they glide,
 Wheeling still on ev'ry side,
 Sometimes winding round about,
 To find the even'st channel out.
 And if thou wilt go with me,
 Leaving mortal company,

In the cool stream shalt thou lie,
 Free from harm as well as I :
 I will give thee for thy food
 No fish that useth in the mud !
 But trout and pike, that love to swim
 Where the gravel from the brim
 Thro' the pure streams may be seen :
 Orient pearl fit for a queen,
 Will I give, thy love to win,
 And a shell to keep them in :
 Not a fish in all my brook
 That shall disobey thy look,
 But, when thou wilt, come sliding by,
 And from thy white hand take a fly.
 And to make thee understand
 How I can my waves command,
 They shall bubble whilst I sing,
 Sweeter than the silver string.

S O N G .

Do not fear to put thy feet
 Naked in the river sweet ;
 Think not leech, or newt, or toad,
 Will bite thy foot, when thou hast trod ;
 Nor let the water rising high,
 As thou wad'st in, make thee cry
 And sob ; but ever live with me,
 And not a wave shall trouble thee !

* * * * *

All ye woods, and trees, and bow'rs,
 All ye virtues and ye pow'rs
 That inhabit in the lakes,
 In the pleasant springs or brakes,
 Move your feet
 To our sound,

Whilst we greet
All this ground,
With his honor and his name
That defends our flocks from blame.

He is great, and he is just,
He is ever good, and must
Thus be honor'd. Daffodillies,
Roses, pinks, and loved lilies,

Let us fling,
Whilst we sing,
Ever holy,
Ever holy,
Ever honour'd, ever young !
Thus great Pan is ever sung.

SUCKLING, WALLER, AND CAREW.

There are but few instances in English poetry, where playfulness and sublimity, each in an eminent degree, are combined. The most sublime poet is the least sportive and playful of all: Shakspeare is the exception, he exhibits both, and affords an instance of "wit and judgment," combined.

Suckling, Waller, Carew and Butler, head the class of sportive poets: they are the most sprightly and graceful; they have the most playful fancy and the most sparkling wit; the most sportive gayety and jovial humor; the highest elegance connected with the most perfect ease; they have the keenest sense of the ludicrous, with the finest perception of the true and beautiful; in a word, they are the most witty, the most sportive, sparkling and polished writers, excepting Prior, and Swift, in the English language. Their humor is the most gay and variable; their wit cuts and sparkles like diamonds: and possessing the finest delicacies of style, and the greatest ease of versification, they are the most piquant and attractive of poets.

The songs and ballads of Suckling are inimitable

for grace and sportive gayety; "they have a pretty touch of a gentle spirit, and seem to savor more of the grape than the lamp." His soul is all joyous melody, and he invests every thing he describes with life and playfulness; as in his ballad on a Wedding, where he says of the bride :

Her feet beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice stole in and out,
As if they feared the light :
But, oh ! she dances such a way !
No sun upon an Easter Day,
Is half so fine a sight.

"It is very daring, and has a sort of playful grandeur," says Mr. Hunt, with reference to this passage, "to compare a lady's dancing with the sun. But as the sun has it all to himself in the heavens, so she, in the blaze of her beauty, on earth. This is imagination fairly displaying fancy." "The following has," he continues, "enchanted every body :

Her lips were red, and one was thin,
Compared with that was next her chin,
Some bee had stung it newly.

Every reader has stolen a kiss at that lip, gay or grave."

THE CARELESS LOVER.

Never believe me if I love,
Or know what 'tis, or mean to prove ;
And yet in faith I lie, I do
And she's extremely handsome too ;
She's fair, she's wondrous fair,

But I care not who knows it,
 E'er I'll die for love, I fairly will forego it.
 This heat of hope, or cold of fear,
 My foolish heart could never bear :
 One sigh imprison'd, ruins more
 Than earthquakes have done heretofore :

She's fair, ——
 When I am hungry I do eat,
 And cut no fingers 'stead of meat ;
 Nor with much gazing on her face,
 Do e'er rise hungry from the place :

She's fair, ——
 A gentle round, filled to the brink,
 To this and t'other friend I drink ;
 And if 'tis named another's health,
 I never make it hers by stealth :

She's fair, ——
 Blackfriars to me, and old Whitehall,
 Is even as much as is the fall
 Of fountains on a pathless grove,
 And nourishes as much as my love :

She's fair, ——
 I visit, talk, do business, play,
 And for a need laugh out a day :
 Who does not thus in Cupid's school
 He makes not love, but plays the fool :
 She's fair, she's wondrous fair,
 But I care not who knows it ;
 E'er I'll die for love, I fairly will forego it.

S O N G .

Honest lover whosoever,
 If in all thy love there ever
 Was one wavering thought, if thy flame
 Were not still even, still the same ;

Know this,
Thou lov'st amiss,
And, to love true,
Thou must begin again, and love anew.
If, when she appears i' the room,
Thou dost not quake, and art struck dumb,
And in striving thus to cover,
Dost not speak thy words twice over ;
Know this,
Thou lov'st amiss,
And, to love true,
Thou must begin again, and love anew.
If fondly thou dost not mistake,
And all defects for graces take ;
Persuad'st thyself that jests are broken,
When she hath little or nothing spoken ;
Know this,
Thou lov'st amiss,
And, to love true,
Thou must begin again, and love anew.
If, when thou appear'st to be within,
Thou lett'st not men ask, and ask again,
And when thou answerest, if it be
To what was asked thee properly ;
Know this,
Thou lov'st amiss,
And, to love true,
Thou must begin again, and love anew.
If, when thy stomach calls to eat,
Thou cutt'st not fingers 'stead of meat ;
And, with much gazing on her face,
Dost not rise hungry from the place ;
Know this,
Thou lov'st amiss,
And, to love true,
Thou must begin again, and love anew.

If by this, thou dost discover,
 That thou art no perfect lover ;
 And desiring to love true,
 Thou dost begin to love anew ;
 Know this,
 Thou lov'st amiss,
 And, to love true,
 Thou must begin again, and love anew.

S O N G .

Why so pale and wan, fond lover !
 Prithee, why so pale ?
 Will, when looking well can't move her,
 Looking ill prevail ?
 Prithee, why so pale ?
 Why so dull and mute, young sinner !
 Prithee, why so mute ?
 Will, when speaking well can't win her,
 Saying nothing do 't ?
 Prithee, why so mute ?
 Quit, quit for shame ! this will not move,
 This cannot take her :
 If of herself she will not love,
 Nothing can make her :—
 The devil take her !

Edmund Waller acknowledged Fairfax to be his model, and like him, he excelled in the elegance and smoothness of his verse. The art of modulation, which was attained in the age of Elizabeth, was neglected in his age : he was superior, in this respect, to most of the writers of his times, and he “added something to our elegance of diction, and something to our property of thought.” Poetry was a recreation to

him, and his muse was his real mistress, to whom he addressed his effusions. "Among Waller's little poems are some," observes Dr. Johnson, "which their excellency ought to secure from oblivion; as, 'To Amoret,' comparing the different modes of regard with which he looks on her and Sacharissa; and the verses 'On Love,' that begin, '*Anger in hasty words or blows.*'"

OF ENGLISH VERSE.

Poets may boast, as safely vain,
Their works shall with the world remain:
Both bound together, live or die,
The verses and the prophecy.

But who can hope his lines should long
Last in a daily-changing tongue?
While they are new, envy prevails,
And as that dies, our language fails.

When architects have done their part,
The matter may betray their art:
Time, if we use ill-chosen stone,
Soon brings a well-built palace down.

Poets that lasting marble seek,
Must carve in Latin, or in Greek:
We write in sand; our language grows,
And, like the tide, our work o'erflows.

Chaucer, his sense can only boast,
The glory of his numbers lost!
Years have defaced his matchless strain,
And yet he did not sing in vain.

The beauties which adorn'd that age,
The shining subjects of his rage,]
Hoping they should immortal prove,
Rewarded with success his love.

This was the generous poet's scope
 And all an English pen can hope,
 To make the fair approve his flame
 That can so far extend their fame.

Verse, thus designed, has no ill fate
 If it arrive but at the date
 Of fading beauty; if it prove
 But as long-liv'd as present love.

S O N G .

Go, lovely Rose!
 Tell her that wastes her time and me,
 That now she knows
 When I resemble her to thee,
 How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,
 And shuns to have her graces spied,
 That, hadst thou sprung
 In deserts where no men abide,
 Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
 Of beauty from the light retir'd:

Bid her come forth,
 Suffer herself to be desir'd,
 And not blush so to be admir'd.

Then die! that she
 The common fate of all things rare
 May read in thee;
 How small a part of time they share
 That are so wondrous sweet and fair!

L O V E ' S F A R E W E L L .

Treading the path to nobler ends,
 A long farewell to love I gave,

Resolved my country, and my friends,
All that remained of me should have.
And this resolve no mortal dame,
None but those eyes could have o'erthrown ;
The nymph I dare not, need not name,
So high, so like herself alone.
Thus the tall oak, which now aspires
Above the fear of private fires,
Grown and design'd for noble use,
Not to make warm, but build the house,
Though from our meaner flames secure,
Must that which falls from heaven endure.

L O V I N G A T S I G H T .

Sweetness, truth, and every grace,
Which time and use are wont to teach,
The eye may in a moment reach
And read distinctly in her face.
Some other nymphs with colors faint,
And pencil slow, may Cupid paint,
And a weak heart in time destroy ;
She has a stamp and prints the boy ;
Can with a single look inflame
The coldest breast, the rudest tame.

S O N G .

While I listen to thy voice,
Chloris, I feel my life decay:
That powerful noise
Calls my flitting soul away.
Oh ! suppress that magic sound,
Which destroys without a wound !
Peace, Chloris, peace ! or singing die,
That together you and I

To heaven may go :
 For all we know
 Of what the blessed do above,
 Is that they sing, and that they love.

Carew has more grace, more tenderness, and a finer fancy than Waller, and his versification is as delicate, and sweet. He lacks energy and diffusion, but is pre-eminent in grace and beauty. For sharpness of fancy, and elegance of language, he was equal, if not superior to any of his time. "Carew," says Mr. Headley, "has the ease without the pedantry of Waller, and perhaps less conceit." Hallam says of him, "few will hesitate to acknowledge that he has more fancy and more tenderness than Waller: but less choice, less judgment and knowledge where to stop, less of the equability which never offends, less attention to the unity and thread of his little pieces. I should hesitate to give him, on the whole, the preference as a poet, taking collectively the attributes of that character."

Mr. Campbell remarks of him, that he is more sparing of frigid thoughts than Waller; and his conceptions, compared to that poet's, are like fruits of a rich flavor, that have been cultured with the same assiduity.

V E R N A L A I R .

Sweetly-breathing Vernal Air
 That with kind warmth dost repair
 Winter's ruins; from whose breast
 All the gums and spice of th' East

Borrow their perfumes ; whose eye
 Gilds the morn, and clears the sky ;
 Whose dishevell'd tresses shed
 Pearls upon the violet-bed ;
 On whose brow, with calm smiles drest,
 The halcyon sits, and builds her nest :
 Beauty, youth, and endless spring,
 Dwell upon thy rosy wing !

Thou, if stormy boreas throws
 Down whole forests when he blows,
 With a pregnant flowery birth
 Canst refresh the teeming earth.
 If he nip the early bud,
 If he blast what 's fair or good,
 If he scatter our choice flowers,
 If he shake our halls or bowers,
 If his rude breath threaten us,
 Thou canst stroke great Æolus,
 And from him the grace obtain
 To bind him in an iron chain.

P A S T O R A L .

SHEPHERD, NYMPH, CHORUS.

Shep. This mossy bank they prest. *Nym.* That aged
 oak

Did canopy the happy pair
 All night from the damp air.

Cho. Here let us sit, and sing the words they spoke,
 Till the day-breaking their embraces broke.

Shep. See, love, the blushes of the morn appear :
 And now she hangs her pearly store
 (Robb'd from the eastern shore)
 I' th' cowslip's bell and rose's ear :
 Sweet, I must stay no longer here.

Nym. Those streaks of doubtful light usher not day,

But show my sun must set: no morn
 Shall shine till thou return:
 The yellow planets, and the gray
 Dawn, shall attend thee on thy way.

Shep. If thine eyes gild my paths, they may forbear
 Their useless shine. *Nym.* My tears will quite
 Extinguish their faint light.

Shep. Those drops will make their beams more clear,
 Love's flames will shine in every tear.

Cho. They kiss'd, and wept; and from their lips and eyes,
 In a mix'd dew of briny sweet,
 Their joys and sorrows meet;
 But she cries out. *Nym.* Shepherd, arise,
 The sun betrays us else to spies.

Shep. The winged hours fly fast whilst we embrace;
 But when we want their help to meet,
 They move with leaden feet.

Nym. Then let us pinion time, and chace
 The day forever from this place.

Shep. Hark! *Nym.* Ah me, stay! *Shep.* For ever.

Nym. No, arise;

We must begone. *Shep.* My nest of spice.

Nym. My soul. *Shep.* My paradise.

Cho. Neither could say farewell, but through their eyes
 Grief interrupted speech with tears supplies.

DISDAIN RETURNED.

He that loves a rosy cheek,
 Or a coral lip admires,
 Or from star-like eyes doth seek
 Fuel to maintain his fires,—
 As old Time makes these decay,
 So his flames must waste away.

But a smooth and steadfast mind,
 Gentle thoughts and calm desires,

Hearts with equal love combined,
Kindle never-dying fires.
Where these are not, I despise
Lovely cheeks, or lips or eyes.

S O N G .

Give me more love, or more disdain,
The torrid or the frozen zone
Bring equal ease unto my pain ;
The temperate affords me none ;
Either extreme, of love or hate,
Is sweeter than a calm estate.

Give me a storm ; if it be love,
Like Danae in a golden shower,
I swim in pleasure ; if it prove
Disdain, that torrent will devour
My vulture-hopes ; and he's possess'd
Of heaven that's but from hell released :
Then crown my joys, or cure my pain ;
Give me more love, or more disdain.

T H E P R I M R O S E .

Ask me why I send you here,
This firstling of the infant year ;
Ask me why I send to you
This primrose, all bepearl'd with dew ;—
I strait will whisper in your ears,
The sweets of love are wash'd with tears.
Ask me why this flower doth show
So yellow, green, and sickly too ;
Ask me why the stalk is weak,
And bending, yet it doth not break ;—
I must tell you, these discover
What doubts and fears are in a lover.

COWLEY, CRASHAW AND DENHAM.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, a new race of poets rose. In the sixteenth century, poetry was full of feeling, fancy, and imagination. She reigned in the human heart, as well as commanded the admiration of the mind.

The poet was not satisfied with relating mere matters of fact, with echoing what was common, but feeling within himself a higher power, and believing that he had a mission to perform superior to that of other men, he was constantly laboring to present to his fellows visions of the unknown, and to strike those higher and mysterious chords which meet with a response in the heart. The beauty and power of words, the elegance of diction, and the harmony of metrical modulation did not particularly engage his mind ; so far as attention was turned to them, it was induced by the *poetic mood* : he was intent upon *effect*, to control the passions and to sway the mind, which is the real secret of his power, who has been the civilizer and instructor of mankind.

This new race of poets that flourished in the seventeenth century, labored to display their learning rather than poetic fire. They paid no regard to mental emotion, nor labored to impart the higher and combined pleasures of sentiment and intellect, but were subtle and metaphysical. They, too, were often careless of their diction ; their poetry "stood the trial of the finger better than of the ear:" they instituted subtlety and conceit for the language of poetry and passion, and their analogies were remote, and their long and frequent similitudes gave an air of fiction and allegory to their most serious work.

In succeeding the allegorical school of Spenser and Drayton, they changed their imagery rather than their style : but thus pruning poetry of a superabundance of image, they deprived it of its native dress, and neglected to give it its sweetest and most attractive grace.

Cowley is acknowledged to stand at the head of the class of metaphysical poets. He has good sense, a nice perception of things, and great learning, but his thoughts are far-fetched, and mechanical. In laboring for thoughts that were new and striking, he overlooked the natural. His powers of comparison and reflection are constantly exercised. The images he combines are often dissimilar, and them he breaks into fragments ; he gives us but a single glance at an object, and then changes the scene by a new and stranger image still. He uses words in their literal sense, and seldom employs a figure of speech. It is only when

he sings of love and wine that he warms into a *passionate description*, and speaks of

Melting love, and soft desire.—

The faults of Cowley are somewhat chargeable upon the taste of the times in which he wrote. Spenser drew largely from the Petrarchian school, which succeeded the provincial bards of Italy, and he for a long time eclipsed the world of song; and the school of Cowley succeeded that of Spenser, as naturally as the tissue of Merino's and Petrarch's poetry succeed the protracted metaphor of the bards.

If Cowley has faults he is not destitute of merit, and he occasionally displays beauties of a high order. Though his diction is careless, even to a fault, he has not corrupted the language with foreign words. He has an elastic spirit, and a sportive fancy. Though sometimes quaint and fantastic, he is often gay and exhilarating. "Such gayety of fancy," observes Dr. Johnson, "such various similitudes, such a succession of images, and such a dance of words, it is impossible to expect, except from Cowley. His strength always appears in his agility—his volatility is not the flutter of a light, but the bound of an elastic mind. His levity never leaves his learning behind it—the moralist, the politician, and the critic, mingle their influence even in this airy frolic of genius. To such a performance, Suckling could have brought the gayety, but not the knowledge. Dryden could have supplied the knowledge, but not the gayety."

With his originality he combines, the gayety of

Suckling, the learning of Dryden, and he uses his native tongue in its unadorned simplicity, and without bestowing much attention upon the felicities of speech and the power of words, he interests the mind, and sometimes affects the heart, touching a chord in the very core of its feelings.

H O P E .

Hope, whose weak being ruined is,
 Alike if it succeed, and if it miss;
 Whom good or ill does equally confound,
 And both the horns of Fate's dilemma wound :
 Vain shadow ! which dost vanquish spite
 Both, at full noon, and perfect night !
 The stars have not a possibility
 Of blessing thee !
 If things then from their end we happy call
 'Tis Hope *is the most hopeless thing of all.*
 Hope, thou bold taster of delight,
 Tho' whilst thou shouldst but taste, devours it,
 Thou bring'st us an estate, yet leav'st us poor,
 By classing it with legacies before !
 The joys which we entire should wed.
 Come deflour'd virgins to our bed :
 Good fortunes without gain imported be,
 Such mighty custom's paid to thee.
 For joy, like wine kept close, does better taste
 If it take air before its spirits waste.

L O V E .

I'll sing of heroes, and of kings,
 In mighty numbers, mighty things.
 Begin my Muse ! but lo ! the strings

To my great song rebellious prove ;
 The strings will sound of naught but love,
 I broke them all and put on new ;
 'Tis this or nothing, sure, will do.
 These, sure, said I, will me obey ;
 These, sure, heroic notes will play.
 Straight I began with thundering Jove,
 And all th' immortal powers but Love ;
 Love smil'd, and from my enfeebled lyre
 Came gentle airs, such as inspire
 Melting love and soft desire.
 Farewell, then, heroes, farewell kings,
 And mighty numbers, mighty things ;
 Love tunes my heart just to my strings.

DRINKING.

The thirsty earth soaks up the rain,
 And drinks and gapes for drink again,
 The plants suck in the earth, and are
 With constant drinking, fresh and fair.
 The sea itself, which one would think
 Should have but little need of drink
 Drinks ten thousand rivers up,
 So filled that they o'erflow the cup.
 The busy sun, (and one would guess
 By 's drunken, fiery face no less)
 Drinks up the sea, and when he's done,
 The moon and stars drink up the sun.
 They drink and dance by their own light,
 They drink and revel all the night.
 Nothing in Nature's sober sound,
 But an eternal health goes round.
 Fill up the bowl, then, fill it high,
 Fill all the glasses there, for why
 Should every creature drink but I :
 Why, man of morals, tell me why ?

B E A U T Y .

Liberal nature did dispense
To all things, arms for their defence ;
And some she arms with sinewy force,
And some with swiftness in the course ;
Some with hard hoofs, or forked claws,
And some with horns or tusked jaws ;
And some with scales and some with wings,
And some with teeth and some with stings,
Wisdom to man she did afford,
Wisdom for shield, and wit for sword.
What to beauteous womankind,
What arms, what armor, has she assigned !
Beauty is both ; for with the fair
What arms, what armor can compare ?
What steel, what gold, or diamond
More impassable is found ?
And yet what flame, what lightning e'er
So great an active force did bear ?
They are all weapon, and they dart
Like porcupines from every part.
Who can, alas ! their strength express
Arm'd when they themselves undress,
Cap a pe with nakedness.

T H E E P I C U R E .

Fill the bowl with rosy wine,
Around our temples roses twine,
And let us cheerfully awhile
Like the wine and roses smile ;
Crown'd with roses we contemn
Gyges' wealthy diadem.
To-day is ours ; what do we fear ?
To-day is ours, we have it here ;

Let us treat it kindly, that it may
 Wish, at least, with us to stay :
 Let us banish business, banish sorrow,
 To the gods belong to-morrow.

FRIENDSHIP IN ABSENCE.

Thousand pretty ways we'll think upon
 To mock our separation.
 Alas ! ten thousand will not do :
 My heart will thus no longer stay,
 No longer 'twill be kept from you,
 But knocks against the breast to get away.
 And when no art affords me help or ease,
 I seek with verse my griefs t' appease :
 Just as a bird that flies about,
 And beats itself against the cage,
 Finding at last no passage out,
 It sits and sings, and so o'ercomes its rage.

Crashaw belongs to the same school of poetry with Cowper, and is like him affected with conceit ; his poetry is frigid and harsh, but it is not without beauty and strength. "There is a prevalent harshness and strained expression in his verses ; but there also many touches of beauty and solemnity, and the strength of his thoughts sometimes appears even in their distortion." There is a faint similitude between him and Milton, both in thought and style. Campbell says of him : if it were not grown into a tedious and impertinent fashion to discover the sources of *Paradise Lost*, one might be tempted to notice some similarity between the speech of Satan, in the *Sospetto di Herode* of Marino, (which Crashaw has translated) and Satan's

Address to the Sun, in Milton. His translations have more merit than his original poetry, which is full of conceit: yet Pope borrowed from him, and did him the honor of acknowledging his obligations.

SOSPETTO DI HERODE.

SATAN'S SPEECH.

——— Oh me ! what great
Portents before mine eyes, their powers advance ?
And serve my purer sight, only to beat
Down my proud thought, and leave it in a trance ?
Frown I, and can great Nature keep her seat ?
And the gay stars lead on the golden dance ;
 Can his attempts above still prosperous be,
 Auspicious still, in spite of hell and me ?
He has my Heaven (what would he more) whose bright
And radiant scepter this bold hand should bear.
And for the never-fading fields of light,
My fair inheritance, he confines me here
To this dark house of shades, horror, and night,
To draw a long-lived death, where all my cheer
 Is the solemnity my sorrow wears,
 That mankind's torment waits upon my tears.
Dark, dusky man, he needs would single forth,
To make the partner of his own pure ray :
And should we, powers of Heaven, spirits of worth,
Bow our bright heads before a King of clay ?
It shall not be, said I ; and clomb the north,
Where never wing of angel yet made way.
 What, though I miss'd my blow ? yet I struck high,
 And to dare something, is some victory.
Is he not satisfied ? means he to wrest
Hell from me too, and sack my territories ?
Vile human nature, means he not t' invest

(O my despite!) with his divinest glories?
 And rising with rich spoils upon his breast,
 With his fair triumphs fill all future stories?
 Must the bright arms of heaven rebuke these eyes?
 Mock me, and dazzle my dark mysteries?
 Art thou not Lucifer? to whom the droves
 Of stars that gild the morn in charge were given?
 The nimblest of the lightning-winged loves?
 The fairest, and the first-born smile of Heaven?
 Look in what pomp the mistress planet moves,
 Rev'rently circled by the lesser seven;
 Such and so rich, the flames that from thine eyes
 Oppressed the common people of the skies.
 Ah, wretch! what boots thee to cast back thy eyes
 Where dawning hope no beam of comfort shows?
 While the reflection of thy forepast joys
 Renders thee double to thy present woes.
 Rather make up to thy new miseries,
 And meet the mischief that upon thee grows.
 If hell must mourn, heaven sure shall sympathize;
 What force can not effect, fraud shall devise.
 And yet what force fear I? have I so lost
 Myself? my strength too with my innocence?
 Come, try, who dares? heaven, earth, whate'er dost boast
 A borrow'd being, make thy bold defence.
 Come thy Creator too, what though it cost
 Me yet a second fall? we'd try our strengths:
 Heaven saw us struggle once: as brave a fight
 Earth now shall see, and tremble at the sight.

LOVE'S HOROSCOPE.

Love, 'brave Virtue's younger brother,
 Erst had made my heart a mother.
 She consults the conscious spheres,
 To calculate her young son's years;

She asks if sad or saving powers
Gave omen to his infant hours;
She asks each star that then stood by
If poor Love shall live or die.

Ah, my heart! is that the way?
Are these the beams that rule thy day?
Thou know'st a face; in whose each look
Beauty lays ope Love's fortune-book:
On whose fair revolutions wait
Th' obsequious motions of Love's fate.
Ah, my heart! her eyes and she
Have taught thee new astrology!
Howe'er Love's native hours were set,
Whatever starry synod met,
'Tis in the mercy of her eye,
If poor Love shall live or die.

If those sharp rays, putting on
Points of death, did Love begone,
(Though the heavens in council sate
To crown an uncontrolled fate;
Though their best aspects, twin'd upon
The kindest constellation,
Cast amorous glances on his birth,
And whisper'd the confederate earth
To pave his paths with all the good
That warms the bed of youth and blood;) ,
Love has no plea against her eye:
Beauty frowns, and Love must die.

But if her milder influence move,
And gild the hopes of humble Love;
(Thou heaven's inauspicious eye
Lay black on Love's nativity:
Though every diamond in Jove's crown
Fixt his forehead to a frown;) ,
Her eye a strong appeal can give:
Beauty smiles; and Love shall live.

Denham and Waller, says Prior, improved our versification, and Dryden perfected it: and Dryden says, the excellence and dignity of rhyme were never fully known till Mr. Waller taught it in lyric, and Sir John Denham in epic poesy. The opinion that Waller and Denham were the "fathers of English versification," was sanctioned by the assertions and practice of Dr. Johnson, Goldsmith, and the whole race of poets who have "touch'd upon the art of poetry, or made selections from our poets," but it is as absurd as it is general. The versification of Chaucer, of Spenser, and Shakspeare has not been essentially improved in the least particular.

Denham improved upon the couplet; he was the first to perfect the sense in couplets, and to give a fullness and a rounded close to his periods. He possessed great strength of thought, good sound sense, and much ease and grace of versification. Pope emulated him in the finish and harmony of his numbers, in strength and condensation of thought. He designed a new scheme of poetry, the object of which is to describe local scenery, and which may be termed landscape poetry. In this he has been followed by Garth, Pope, Goldsmith, and others, till local and particular scenery has become the common inheritance of poetry.

COOPER'S HILL.

Sure there are poets which did never dream
Upon Parnassus, nor did taste the stream
Of Helicon; we therefore may suppose
Those made not poets, but the poets those:

And as courts make not kings, but kings the court,
 So where the Muses and their train resort
 Parnassus stands; if I can be to thee
 A poet, thou Parnassus art to me.
 Nor wonder if (advantag'd in my flight
 By taking wing from thy auspicious height,
Through untraced ways, and airy paths I fly,
 More boundless in my fancy than my eye;
 My eye, which swift as thought contracts the space
 That lies between, and first salutes the place,
 Crown'd with that sacred pile, so vast, so high,
 That whether 'tis a part of earth or sky,
 Uncertain seems and may though be a proud
 Aspiring mountain, or descending cloud;
 Paul's, the late theme of such a Muse, whose flight
 Has bravely reached and soar'd above thy height;
 Now shalt thou stand, though sword, or time or fire,
 Or zeal, more fierce than they, thy fall conspire,
 Secure, whilst thee the best of poets sings
 Preserv'd from ruin by the best of kings.

THE THAMES. •

My eye, descending from the hill, surveys
 Where Thames among the wanton vallies strays;
 Thames! the most loved of all the Ocean's sons,
 By his old sire, to his embraces runs,
 Hast'ning to pay his tribute to the sea,
 Like mortal life to meet eternity.
 Though with those storms he no resemblance hold,
 Whose foam is amber and their gravel gold:
 His genuine and less justly wealth t' explore,
 Search not his bottom but survey his shore.

* * * * *

Here Nature, whether more intent to please
 Us or herself with strange varieties,
 (For things of wonder give no less delight

To the wise Maker, than beholder's sight;
Though these delights from several causes move,
For so our children, thus our friends we love)
Wisely she knew the harmony of things
As well as that of sounds, from discord springs.
Such was the discord which did first disperse
Form, order, beauty through the universe.
While dryness, moisture, coldness, heat resists
All that we have, and that we are subsists;
While the steep horrid roughness of the wood
Strives with the gentle calmness of the flood,
Such huge extremes, when nature doth unite
Wonder from thence results, from thence delights.

S O N G .

Morpheus, the humble god, that dwells
In cottages and smoky cells,
Hates gilded roofs, and beds of down;
And, though he fears no prince's frown,
Flies from the circle of a crown.

Come, I say, thou powerful God,
And thy leaden charming rod,
Dipp'd in the Lethean lake,
O'er his wakeful temples shake,
Lest he should sleep, and never wake.

Nature, alas! why art thou so
Obliged to thy greatest foe?
Sleep, that is thy best repast,
Yet of death it bears a taste,
And both are the same thing at last.

JOHN MILTON.



MILTON is the last of the great English poets; he is the last of that class that depended on their own energy for success, and described nature as it is. Strictly speaking, there are but four English poets; Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare and Milton; no others emulate these. Take them all in all, they are as far from the generality of those that bear the name, as heaven is from earth. They are poets, according to Dryden's definition, and more, "they perfected, and all but created," "their arts." "These giant-sons of genius stand indeed upon the earth, but they tower above their fellows," and excel them as much as universal genius exceeds a particular talent. They lived in the dawn of science; but they rose, in their own art, to such sublime heights, that they have never been emulated; and they rendered their names as imperishable as the English language.

It is ungenerous, however, to give them, in the English language, an exclusive claim to the distinction of *Poet*: according to the notions of Mr. Hazlitt, we are all poets, and the world is full of poetry, nothing but poetry, save a vast proportion of what professes to be such. "The best general notion," he ob-

serves, "which I can give of poetry, is, that it is the natural expression of any object or event, by its vividness, exciting a voluntary movement of the imagination, and passion, and producing, by sympathy, a certain modulation of the voice, or sounds expressing it." "Many people suppose that poetry is something to be found only in books, contained in lines of ten syllables, with like endings: but wherever there is a sense of beauty, or power, or harmony, as in the motion of a wave of the sea, in the growth of a flower, that 'spreads its sweet leaves to the air, and dedicates its beauty to the sun'—*there* is poetry in its birth." "Fear is poetry, hope is poetry, love is poetry, hatred is poetry; contempt, jealousy, remorse, admiration, wonder, pity, despair, or madness, are all poetry." "Man is a poetical animal:—The child is a poet, in fact, when he first plays at hide-and-seek, or repeats the story of Jack the Giant-killer; the shepherd boy is a poet, when he first crowns his mistress with a garland of flowers; the countryman, when he stops to look at the rainbow; the city-apprentice, when he gazes at the Lord-Mayor's show; the miser, when he hugs his gold; the courtier who builds his hopes upon a smile; the savage, who paints his idol with blood; the slave, who worships a tyrant, or the tyrant, who fancies himself a god;—the vain, the ambitious, the proud, the choleric man, the hero and the coward, the beggar and the king, the rich and the poor, the young and the old, all live in a world of their own making; and the poet does no more than describe what all the others think and act." This is a grand flourish to-

wards rejecting all distinctions : it would be as easy to conclude with D'Holbach, that the universe is composed only of matter, and that the different phenomena that are displayed, are the effects of motion, and the results of *organization*. Mr. Hunt's definition is more definite, accordingly : *poetry*, strictly and artistically so called, that is to say, considered not merely as poetic feeling, which is more or less shared by all the world, but as the operation of that feeling, such as we see it in the poet's book, is the utterance of a passion for truth, beauty and power, embodying and illustrating its conceptions by imagination and fancy, and modulating its language on the principle of variety in uniformity. Its means are whatever the universe contains ; and its ends, pleasure and exaltation.

The charm, the sacredness, the dignity which we are accustomed to attach to poetry, and which seem to be inseparable from it, are not to be embodied in definitions ; and the more there is written about it, the more difficult the solution of the question, What is Poetry, seems to be. Poetry has become prostituted : its votaries no longer acquire the distinction of the venerable, and the notion that there is something *divine* in the art, is not generally entertained in these days of "equality and equal rights." It is a late discovery that "man is a poetical animal." But few appreciate the power of poetry, and none acknowledge the *divinity* of its nature. "Rocks and deserts re-echo sounds ; savage beasts are often soothed by music, and listen to its charms ; and shall we, with all the advantages of the best education, be unaffected

with the voice of poetry?" This appeal, which was made to a Roman tribunal, might be made with equal significance to those who debase the profession of the divine art, either for profit, or to serve the purposes of their own peculiar system. It was not so regarded by those who excelled in it; the master-spirits of the art considered it the divinest of all the arts: that it was the offspring of the highest powers of their being; that it was the development of the divinity within, or the principles and germs of their future being, which was wrapped up in the immortal soul. Chaucer sings from an "excess of spirit;" Spenser from the "infusion of a sweet spirit;" Shakspeare's eye

"Doth glance *from heaven* to earth, from earth to heaven;"

and Milton did not believe that poetry was to be "raised from the heat of youth or the vapors of wine; like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amonist, or the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite, nor to be obtained by the invocation of dame Memory and her siren daughters, but by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and send out his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases." That alone which is pure, lovely, and ennobling in its nature, is poetry. That only which brings one into sympathy with universal nature; which has the energy and immortality of the soul itself; that which possesses something that is not of this earth, but has something divine in it, is poetry. "We

agree," says Dr. Channing, "with Milton in his estimate of poetry. It seems to us the divinest of all arts; for it is the breathing or expression of that sentiment, which is deepest and sublimest in human nature; we mean, of that thirst or aspiration, to which no mind is wholly a stranger, for something purer and lovelier, something more powerful, lofty and thrilling than ordinary and real life affords. No doctrine is more common among christians than that of man's immortality; but it is not so generally understood, that the germs or principles of his whole future being are now wrapped up in his soul, as the rudiments of the future plant in the seed. As a necessary result of this constitution, the soul, possessed and moved by these mighty though infant energies, is perpetually stretching beyond what is present and visible, struggling against the bounds of its earthly prison-house, and seeking relief and joy in imaginings of unseen and ideal being. This view of our nature, which has never been fully developed, and which goes farther towards explaining the contradictions of human life than all others; carries us to the very foundation and sources of poetry. He who cannot interpret by his own consciousness what we now have said, wants the true key to works of genius. He has not penetrated those sacred recesses of the soul, where poetry is born and nourished, and inhales immortal vigor, and wings herself for her heavenward flight." Passion is to poetry what colors are to the painter; poetry displays the universe in the colors which the passions throw over it, but in designs, according to her own conception. Poetry, as Macauley

has it, is the art of doing by means of words what the painter does by means of colors. It does more; it infinitely transcends painting: "painting gives the object itself; poetry, what it implies. Painting embodies what a thing contains in itself: poetry suggests what exists out of it, in any manner connected with it." It breaks down the distinctions between the real and the ideal, between the spiritual and the material, and spiritualizes and adorns the whole with the splendors of a new creation. It brings to light the unseen and reveals the unknown: it breaks down the distinctions of nature and forms all things anew for the gratification of the most sacred and lofty aspiration of the soul: and it needs must be something more than human; it "has something divine in it," says Lord Byron, "because it raises the mind and hurries it into sublimity, by conforming the shows of things to the desires of the soul." Such is the nature of poetry, and he is a poet who feels the operations of the Divinity in his own breast, "and seeing its infinitely changing play upon the wide theatre of the universe, suffers the eye of reason to survey the banks between which the stream of inspiration is to leap and sparkle."

In comparing these four great poets together, certain characteristics are seen which are radically opposed to the established canons of criticism. Chaucer lived in the most unenlightened age, and yet he "excels as the poet of manners, or of real life." Milton lived in the most enlightened, nevertheless he is the "the sublimest of men." Spenser is identified with romance, and the luxury and affluence of his muse have given to his age

the distinction of being the most POETICAL. Shakspeare is the poet of nature, and in this respect no other name is put in competition with his.

The superiority of Milton is accounted for by attributing to him the superiority of genius, a genius that overcomes the obstacles, real or supposed, that the advancement of learning and civilization, present to the production of pure poetry.

Nothing is more evident than that Milton is not yet appreciated; his sublimity and morality are the only characteristics that are willingly ascribed to him. These, together with his learning, seem almost to exclude him from the pale of pure poetry. "He is held in distant reverence," rather than cherished in the heart. "The grandeur of his mind has thrown some shade over his milder beauties."

His admiration for Dante and Petrarch; his love, as he expresses it, for the transparent wave of the Il-lissus, the banks of Arno, and the hills of Fæsolæ, are betrayed in his diction; but he has poured out so many of the richest fancies, and combined so many inimitable forms of beauty and loveliness, that those who appreciate him, will, like all true lovers, see beauty even in this deformity.

His mind was enriched with "all utterance and knowledge," and to this was "added industrious and select reading, steady observation and insight into all seemly and generous arts, and affairs," and if he was not a *born-poet*, still greater praise is due to him, for the heat of his mind is such as to *sublimate his learning*, and to refine and vivify his almost limitless

knowledge into the highest order of poetry ;—poetry which is the production of the noblest powers of the mind. So intense and ardent is his imagination, that it penetrates the whole mass of his learning, and makes it radiant with beauty. As the central fires of the earth have converted the common rocks, dull and opaque, and filled with fragments of skeletons and shells, into white crystalline marble,—so did Milton's genius transform, metamorphise, his erudition into divine verse.

His genius was not confined within the narrow limits of this world ; not satisfied with painting pictures of the real, he was constantly aiming to sketch the unknown ; he goes out into Chaos and night, where imagination alone can bear him, and there creates worlds, and peoples them with a corresponding order of beings, and enlarges the bounds of the universe. Rising above things before attempted, "in prose or rhyme," he winged his daring flight to heaven, and projected a movement that involved the destiny of the universe. He did not, like Homer, bring the gods down to earth to mingle in the contest with men, but, with his mighty forces, he besieges the Eternal Throne ; and it trembles ; the foundations of the universe are shaken. He does not bring forth a silver-footed goddess, to inspire his hosts, nor does he send out a sullen hero to disperse the rebels with a shout, but he imbues his followers with a native energy equal to the contest, and he sends forth one, at whose mere frown the victors are vanquished. Though cast out of heaven, and overwhelmed,

With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,

he can raise them up again to aspire, with confident hope, against the Throne that they have once shaken :

But see ! the angry victor hath recall'd
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit
Back to the gates of heaven : the sulphurous hail,
Shot after us in storm, o'erblown, hath laid
The fiery surge, that from the precipice
Of heaven received us falling ; and *the thunder,*
Wing'd with red lightning, and impetuous rage,
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless deep.
Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn,
Or satiate fury, yield it from our Foe.
Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
The seat of desolation, void of light,
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames,
Cast pale and dreadful ? Thither let us tend
From off the tossing of these fiery waves ;
There rest, if any rest can harbor there ;
And re-assembling our afflicted Powers,
Consult how we may henceforth most offend
Our enemy ; our own loss repair,
How overcome this dire calamity ;
What reinforcement we may gain from hope :
If not, what resolution from despair.

Milton's fancy is seldom seen unaccompanied by imagination : he is too serious, too much imbued with austere feeling, with the spirit of a solemn and severe religion, to indulge freely in the playfulness of fancy. He is too intent upon his subject to sport with mere resemblances ; to amuse himself with airy and fantas-

tic creations. He never descends to a witticism ; nor calls up those lively images which enter the mind with gayety, and as by a sudden flash. This is the reason why he is not universally admired. The mind recoils from continued vigor of thought, and retires into itself, or sports with fanciful relations. He is intent upon truth and beauty ; but his fancy can paint such flowers as grow in paradise. In the picture of his Eden, he has combined every object that is beautiful in nature. Spenser's Bower of Bliss does not compare with it, and it far surpasses the Elysian fields of ancient song. To the perfect art of the painter he has added the peculiar charm of poetry. The painter that should portray this scene, and realize the impression which the reading of a single passage gives, would triumph completely over the obstacles : to a successful mingling of the lofty with the low, the wild with the gentle, the beautiful with the sublime, sunshine with shade. Here are honey for the taste, odor for the smell, beauty for the eye, and grandeur for the mind.

So on he fares, and to the border comes
Of Eden, whose delicious Paradise,
Now nearer, crowns with her enclosures green,
As with a rural mound, the champaign head
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
Access denied ; and over-head up-grew
Insuperable height of loftiest shade,
Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
A silvan scene, and, as the ranks ascend
Shade above shade, a woody theater
Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops

The verdurous wall of Paradise up sprung ;
 Which to our general sire gave prospect large
 Into his nether empire neighboring round.
 And higher than that wall, a circling row
 Of goodliest trees, loaden with fairest fruit,
 Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue
 Appear'd, with gay enamel'd colors mix't:
 On which the sun more glad, impress'd his beams,
 Than on fair evening cloud, or humid bow,
 When God hath shower'd the earth ; so lovely seem'd
 That landscape : and of pure, now purer air
 Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires
 Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
All sadness but despair : Now gentle gales
 Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
 Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
 Those balmy spoils. As when to them who sail
 Beyond the cape of Hope, and now are pass'd
 Mozambic, off at sea, north-east winds blow
 Sabeian odors from the spicy shore
 Of Araby the bless'd with such delay ;
 Well pleased, they slack their course, and many a league
 Cheer'd with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles :—

Here are fresh fountains, that run nectar,

Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold ;

and groves, whose rich trees wept odorous gums and
 balm ; flowers of all hue ; purple grapes, crystal
 streams, songs of birds, and vernal airs. The field of
 Enna, where Proserpine gathered flowers, nor that
 sweet grove of Daphne, by Orantes and the inspired
 Castalian spring could not compare with this paradise
 of Eden. This is painted with exquisite taste, and with
 an affluence of fancy surpassing any thing that Spenser
 ever wrote.

It is remarked, somewhere, by Mr. Stewart, that it is not more the office of language to convey knowledge from one mind to another, than to bring mind into contact with mind; to bring two minds into the same train of thinking, and confine them to the same track; and the mechanism of language is not more wonderful, than the process it puts in action behind the scene. This is peculiarly the case with some of Milton's poetry. There is often an extreme remoteness in the associations by which he acts upon the mind of the reader; and it is therefore said of him that he "electrifies the mind by conductors:" but in these passages, and in all his small poems, there is a simplicity, a mellow richness, so to speak, and a vividness, unsurpassed by any writer in the language; and hence Dr. Channing has observed of his poetry, that it "breathes a sensibility and tenderness allied to its sublimity."

COMUS, A MASK.

Comus is one of the most finished poems in the language, it is a suite of speeches, observes Mr. Warton, not interesting by discrimination of character, not conveying variety of incidents, nor gradually exciting curiosity; but perpetually attracting attention by sublime sentiment, and fanciful imagery of the richest vein, by an exuberance of picturesque description, poetical allusion, and ornamental expression. This poem has all the sweetness of the sweetest; it possesses a subdued calmness in the expression of the most tender sensibility; it has the richest structure of versification and the finest fancy, though it does not deviate into all

the wildness of romantic fable, only because it is guarded and subdued by a chaste and elegant taste.

THE ATTENDANT SPIRIT.

The first scene discovers a wild wood. Two brothers, with their sister, stray from her in a wood, and she is conducted by a sorcerer into a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness, soft music, tables spread with all dainties, where she is set in an enchanted chair. The Attendant Spirit conducts the brothers thither, who rush in with swords drawn. The enchanter escapes, and leaves the lady fixed in the chair; she is freed by Sabrina, who, invoc'd in song, rises from her coral hall.

Before the starry threshold of Jove's court
 My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
 Of bright aerial spirits live inspher'd
 In regions mild of calm and serene air,
 Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,
 Which men call Earth; and with low-thoughted care
 Confin'd and pester'd in this pinfold here,
 Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
 Unmindful of the crown that virtue gives,
 After this mortal change, to her true servants
 Amongst the enthron'd Gods on sainted seats.
 Yet some there be that by due steps aspire
 To lay their just hands on that golden key
 That opes the palace of eternity;
 To such my errand is; and but for such,
 I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds
 With the rank vapors of this sin worn-mould.

* * * * *

Therefore, when any favor'd of high Jove
 Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
I shoot from heaven, to give him safe convoy,
 As now I do; but first I must put off
These my sky robes, spun out of Iris' woof,

And take the weeds and likeness of a swain,
 That to the service of this house belongs,
 Who with his soft pipe, and smooth-dittied song,
 Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
 And hush the waving woods ; nor of less faith
 And in this office of his mountain watch,
 Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid
 Of this occasion. But I hear the tread
 Of hateful steps ; I must be viewless now.

Comus enters with a charming rod in one hand, his glass in the other, with him a rout of monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistening ; they come in making a riotous and unruly noise with torches in their hands.

Comus. The star that bids the shepherd fold,
 Now the top of heaven doth hold ;
 And the gilded car of day
 His glowing axle doth allay
 In the steep Atlantic stream ;
 And the slope sun his upward beam
 Shoots against the dusky pole,
 Pacing toward the other goal
 Of his chamber in the east.
 Meanwhile, welcome Joy, and Feast,
 Midnight Shout and Revelry,
 Topsy Danee and Jollity.
 Braid your locks with rosy twine,
 Dropping odors, dropping wine.
 Rigor now is gone to bed,
 And Advice with scrup'lous head,
 Strict Age and sour Severity,
 With their grave saws in slumber lie.
We that are of purer fire
 Imitate the starry quire,
 Who in their nightly watchful spheres,
 Lead in swift round the months and years.

* * * * *

THE MEASURE.

Break off, break off, I feel the different pace
 Of some chaste footing near about this ground.
 Run to your shrouds, within these brakes and trees ;
 Our number may affright : Some virgin sore
 (For so I can distinguish by mine art)
 Benighted in the woods. Now to my charms,
 And to my wily trains ; I shall ere long
 Be well-stock'd with as fair a herd as grazed
 About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl
 My dazzling spells into the spongy air,
 Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,
 And give it false presentments, lest the place,
 And my quaint habits, breed astonishment
 And put the damsel to suspicious flight,
 Which must not be, for that's against my course :
 I, under fair pretence of friendly ends,
 And well-placed words of glozing courtesy,
 Baited with reasons not implausible,
 Wind me into the easy-hearted man
 And hug him into snares. When once her eye
 Hath met the virtue of his magic dust
 I shall appear some harmless villager
 Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.
 But here she comes ; I fairly step aside,
 And hearken, if I may, her business here.

[The Lady enters.]

This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,
 My best guide now ; methought it was the sound
 Of riot, and ill-manag'd merriment,
 Such as the jocund flute, or gamesome pipe
 Stirs up among the loose unletter'd hinds,
 When for their teeming flocks, and granges full,
 In wanton dance, they praise the bounteous Pan,
 And thank the god's amiss. I should be loath
 To meet the rudeness and swill'd insolence

Of late wassailers ; yet oh ! where else
 Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
 In the blind mazes of this tangled wood ?
 My brothers, when they saw me wearied out
 With this long way, resolving here to lodge
 Under the spreading favor of these pines,
 Stepped, as they said, to the next thicket side
 To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
 As the kind hospitable woods provide.

* * * * *

Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud
 Turn forth her silver lining on the night ?
 I did not err, there does a sable cloud
 Turn forth her silver lining on the night
 And casts a gleam over this tufted grove :
 I cannot halloo to my brothers, but
 Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest,
 I'll venture, for my new enliven'd spirits
 Prompt me ; and they perhaps are not far off.

S O N G .

Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen
 Within thy airy shell,
 By slow Meander's margent green,
 And in the violet-embroider'd vale,
 Where the love-lorn nightingale
 Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well ;
 Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
 That likest thy Narcissus are ?
 O, if thou have
 Hid them in some flow'ry cave,
 Tell me but where,
 Sweet queen of parly, daughter of the sphere !
 So mayst thou be translated to the skies,
 And gives resounding grace to all heav'n's harmonies.

[Enter COMUS.

Com. Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould

Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
 Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
 And with these raptures moves the vocal air
 To testify his hidden residence:
 How sweetly did they float upon the wings
 Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
 At every fall smoothing the raven down
 Of darkness till it smiled.

* * * * *

— Such a sacred and home-felt delight,
 Such sober certainty of waking bliss
 I never heard till now. I'll speak to her,
 And she shall be my queen. Hail, foreign wonder!
 Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
 Unless the goddess that in rural shrine
 Dwell'st here with Pan, or Silvan, by blest song,
 Forbidding every bleak, unkindly fog
 To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood

Lady. Nay, gentle Shepherd, ill is lost that praise
 That is addressed to unattending ears;
 Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift,
 How to regain my sever'd company,
 Compell'd me to awake the courteous Echo
 To give me answer from her mossy couch.

Com. What chance, good Lady, hath bereft you thus?

Lady. Dim darkness, and this leafy labyrinth.

Com. Could that divide you from near ushering guides?

Lady. They left me weary on a grassy turf.

Com. By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?

Lady. To seek i' the valley some cool, friendly spring.

Com. And left your fair side all unguarded, Lady?

Lady. They were but twain, and purpos'd quick return.

Com. Perhaps forestalling night prevented them.

Lady. How easy my misfortune is to hit!

Com. Imports their loss, beside the present need?

Lady. No less than if I should my Brothers lose.

Com. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?

Lady. As smooth as Hebe's, their unrazor'd lips.

Com. Two such I saw, what time the labor'd ox
 In his loose traces from the furrow came,
 And the swink'd hedger at his supper sat;
 I saw them under a green mantling vine
 That crawls along the side of yon small hill,
 Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots;
 Their port was more than human, as they stood:
 I took it for a fairy vision
 Of some gay creatures of the element,
 That in the colors of the rainbow live,
 And play i' the plighted clouds. I was awe-struck,
 And as I pass'd, I worshipp'd: if those you seek,
 It were a journey like the path to heaven,
 To help you find them.

* * * * *

SONG.

Sabrina fair,

Listen where thou art sitting
 Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
 In twisted braids of lilies knitting
 The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;
 Listen for dear honor's sake,
 Goddess of the silver lake,
 Listen and save.

Listen and appear to us
 In name of great Oceanus,
 By th' earth-shaking Neptune's mace,
 And Tethy's grave, majestic pace,
 By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,
 And the Carpathian wisard's hook,
 By scaly Triton's winding shell,
 And old soothsaying Glaucus' spell,
 By Leucothea's lovely hands,

And her son that rules the strands,
 By Thetis' tinsel-slipper'd feet,
 And the songs of Sirens sweet,
 By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,
 And fair Ligea's golden comb,
 Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks,
 Sleeking her soft alluring locks,
 By all the nymphs that nightly dance
 Upon thy streams, with wily glance,
 Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head
 From thy coral-paven bed,
 And bridle in thy headlong wave,
 Till thou our summons answered have.

Listen and save.

SABRINA rises, attended by water-nymphs, and sings

By the rushy-fringed bank,
 Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
 My sliding chariot stays,
 Thick set with agate, and the azure sheen
 Of turkis blue, and emerald green;
 That in the channel strays.
 Whilst from off the waters fleet,
 Thus I set my printless feet
 O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
 That bends not as I tread;
 Gentle swain, at thy request
 I am here.

Sp. Goddess dear,
 We implore thy powerful hand
 To undo the charmed band
 Of true virgin here distressed,
 Through the force, and through the wile
 Of unblest enchanter vile.

Sabr. Shepherd, 'tis my office best
 To help ensnared chastity:
 Brightest Lady, look on me;

Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
 Drops that from my fountain pure
 I have kept of precious cure,
 Thrice upon thy finger's tip,
 Thrice upon thy rubied lip;
 Next this marble venom'd seat,
 Smear'd with gums of glutinous heat,
 I touch with chaste palms, moist and cold :
 Now the spell hath lost his hold ;
 And I must haste ere morning hour
 To wait in Amphi^{tr}ite's bow'r.

SABRINA descends, and the LADY rises out of her seat.

* * * * *

S O N G .

Sp. Back, Shepherds, back, enough your play,
 Till next sunshine holiday ;
 Here be without duck or nod
 Other trippings to be trod
 Of lighter toes, and such court guise
 As Mercury did first devise,
 With the mincing Dryades, †
 On the lawns, and on the leas.

S O N G .

Noble Lord and Lady bright,
 I have brought ye new delight,
 Here behold so goodly grown
 Three fair branches of your own ;
 Heav'n hath timely tried their youth,
 Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
 And sent them here through hard assays,
 With a crown of deathless praise,
 To triumph in victorious dance
 O'er sensual folly and intemperance.

EPILOGUE.

Sp. To the ocean now I fly,
 And those happy climes that lie
 Where day never shuts his eye,
 Up in the broad fields of the sky :
 There I suck the liquid air
 All amidst the gardens fair
 Of Hesperus, and his daughters three,
 That sing about the golden tree ;
 Along the crisped shades and bowers,
 Revels the spruce and jocund Spring,
 The Graces, and the rosy-bosom'd Hours,
 Thither all their bounties bring :
 There eternal Summer dwells,
 And west-winds, with musky wing,
 About the cedan alleys fling
 Nard and Cassia's balmy smells.

* * * * *

But, now my task is done,
 I can fly, or I can run
 Quickly to the green earth's end,
 Where the bow'd welkin slow doth bend,
 And from thence can soar as soon
 To the corners of the moon.

Mortals, that would follow me,
 Love Virtue, she alone is free ;
 She can teach ye how to climb
 Higher than the sphery chime :
 Or, if virtue feeble were,
 Heaven itself would stoop to her.

The greatest of Milton's juvenile performances, observes Dr. Johnson, is the mask of *COMUS*, in which may very plainly be discovered the dawn of *PARADISE LOST*. This work displays Milton's fancy in its most

airy and frolicsome mood. Nothing is more sportive and playful than the

Tipsy Dance, and Jollity,

of Comus and his rout; they are of the *purser fire*, and as buoyant and elastic as

———"The pert fairies, and the dapper elves."

His tenderness, like his fancy, is subdued, and self-possessed: he "is the master of his own enthusiasm," and his sensibility is unobserved, because he does not display his feeling in fitful flashes. Nothing in Shakespeare, for tenderness, or in the power of music, surpasses Comus's, and the Spirit's description of the Lady's singing:

At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose like a stream of rich distill'd perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was 'ware, and wish'd she might
Deny her nature, and be never more,
Still to be so displac'd. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a sound
Under the ribs of death.

The illustration of that inimitable stroke of the power of the Lady's voice,

At every fall, smoothing the raven down
Of darkness, till it smiled,

is found, Mr. Mitford observes, in the following passage from Heywood's *Love Mistress*, Act iii. sc. 1.

P S Y C H E.

Time's eldest daughter, Night, mother of Ease,
 Thou gentle nurse, that with sweet lullabies,
 Care-waking hearts to gentle slumber charms't!
 Thou *smooth* cheek'd negro, Night, the black-eyed Queen,
 That rid'st about the world on the *soft backs*
Of downy Raven's sleek and sable plumes,
 And from thy chariot *silent darkness* flings,
 In which man, beast, and bird enveloped,
 Take their repose and rest.

Il Penseroso and L'Allegro are perfect pictures of two opposite states of mind. Nothing more perfect, in the way of poetic painting, can be conceived than the collection of grave and gay images which these two small poems present. On the one hand, there is brought together every association that induces reflection, calculated to turn the mind, from the external world, in upon itself. On the other, all that is sportive and mirthful, and which is calculated to elicit the mind in an airy frolic of fancy; we have *ebon* shades, and *glimmering* bowers; the wild wood-notes of Fancy's child, and Lydian airs that dissolve the soul of harmony; with the sound of the curfew, and the sullen roar of waters. On the one hand, music induces

—— Wanton heed and giddy cunning;

on the other, it dissolves the soul into extacies, but brings

—— all heaven before mine eyes;

in a word, one set of association induces mirth, the other, contemplation.

IL PENSEROSO.

Hence, vain deluding joys,
 The brood of folly without father bread,
 How little you bestead,
 Or fill the fixed mind with all your toys !
 Dwell in some idle brain,
 And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
 As thick and numberless
 As the gay motes that people the sunbeams,
 Or likest hovering dreams,
 The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.

But hail, thou goddess, sage and holy,
 Hail, divinest Melancholy !
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view,
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue ;
 Black, but such as in esteem
 Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
 Or that starr'd Ethiop queen, that strove
 To set her beauty's praise above
 The sea-nymphs, and their powers offended :
 Yet thou art higher far descended :
 Thee bright hair'd Vesta, long of yore
 To solitary Saturn bore :
 His daughter she, (in Saturn's reign
 Such mixture was not held a stain.)
 Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
 He met her and in secret shades
 Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
 While yet there was no fear of Jove.
 Come pensive Nun, devout and pure,
 Sober, steadfast and demure,
 All in a robe of darkest grain,
 Flowing with majestic train,

And sable stole of cypress lawn
 Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
 Come, but keep thy wonted state
 With even step *and musing gait*
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes ;
 There held in holy passion still
 Forget thyself to marble, till,
 With a sad, leaden, downward cast,
 Thou fix them on the earth as fast ;—
 And join with the calm peace and quiet
 Spare Fast, that oft with Gods doth diet,
 And hears the Muses in a ring,
 Aye, round about Jove's altar sing :
 And add to these, retired Leisure,
 That in trim gardens takes his pleasure :
 But first and chiefest, with thee bring
 Him that yon soars on golden wing,
 Guiding the fiery-wheel'd throne,
 The cherub Contemplation :
 And the mute Silence, hist along,
 'Less Philomel will deign a song
 In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of night
 While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
 Gently o'er the accustom'd oak.
 Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy !
 Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among
 I woo, to hear thy even-song :
And missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon,
Riding near her highest noon
Like one that had been lead astray
Through the heaven's wild pathless way ;

*And oft as if her head she bow'd,
 Stooping through a fleecy cloud,
 Oft on a plat of rising ground
 I hear the far-off Curfew sound
 Over some wide-water'd shore,
 Swinging slow, with sullen roar ;
 Or if the air will not permit,
 Some still removed place will fit,
 Where glowing embers through the room
 Teach light to counterfeit a gloom;
 Far from all resort of mirth,
 Save the cricket on the hearth,
 Or the bellman's drowsy charm
 To bless the doors from nightly harm.
 Or, let my lamp at midnight hour
 Be seen in some high lonely tow'r,
 Where I may oft out-watch the Bear,
 With thrice-great Hermes, or unsphere
 The spirit Plato, to unfold
 What worlds, or what vast regions, hold
 The immortal mind, that hath forsook
 Her mansion in this fleshly nook :
 And of those demons that are found
 In fire, air, flood, or under ground,
 Whose power hath a true consent
 With planet, or with element.
 Sometime, let gorgeous tragedy
 In scepter'd pall, come sweeping by,
 Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line
 Or the tale of Troy divine ;
 Or what (though rare) of later age
 Ennobled hath the buskin'd stage.
 But O, sad virgin, that thy power
 Might raise Musaeus from his bower,
 Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing,
 Such notes as warbled to the string.*

Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what love did seek !
Or call up him that left half told,
The story of Cambuscan bold ;
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That own'd the virtuous ring and glass ;
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride :
*And if aught else great bards beside,
In sage and solemn tunes have sung
Of tourneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.*
Thus night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited morn appear ;
Not trick'd and form'd as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,^t
But kerchief'd in a comely cloud,
*While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or usher'd with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute-drops from off the eaves :*
And when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, goddess bring,
*To arched walks of twilight groves,
And shadow brown that sylvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe, with heaved stroke,
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.*
There in close covert, by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honied thigh,

*That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring
With such consort as they keep
Entice the drowsy-feather'd sleep ;
And let some strange, mysterious dream
Wave at his wings in aery stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eye-lids laid ;
And as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high embower'd roof
With antic pillars, massy proof,
And storied windows, richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light :
There let the pealing organ blow
To the full voic'd choir below ;
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes.*

And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit, and rightlly spell
Of every star that heaven doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew ;
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures Melancholy give,
And I with thee will choose to live.

I walk unseen ;—the poet, in the contemplative

mood, walks unseen ; in the mirthful, *not unseen* ; in the one case, he has the sunshine of noon-day about him, in the other, the shades of night.

L' ALLEGRO.

Hence, loathed Melancholy,
Of Cerebus and blackest midnight born,
In Stygian cave forlorn,
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy,
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night-raven sings ;
There under ebon shades, and low-brow'd rocks.
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.

But come, thou goddess, fair and free,
In heaven yclept Euphrosyne,
And by men, heart-easing mirth ;
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
With two sister graces more,
To ivy-crowned Bacchus bore :
Or whether, as some sages sing,
The frolic wind, that breathes the spring,
Zephyr—with Aurora playing
As he met her once a Maying,
There on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
Fill'd her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful Jollity,
Quips and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks, and *wreathed smiles*,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek ;

Sport that wrinkled care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come and trip it, as you go,
On the light fantastic toe ;
And in thy right hand, lead with thee
The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty ;
And if I give thee honor due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreprieved pleasures free ;
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise ;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good morrow,
Through the sweet-briar, or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine :
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin,
And to the stack, or the barn-door
Stoutly struts his dames before :
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill :
Some time walking, *not unseen,*
By hedge-row elms, on hillocks green,
Bright against the eastern gate
Where the great Sun begins his state,
Rob'd in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight ;
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milk-maid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,

*And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the landskip round it measures ;
Russet lawns, and fallows gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray,
Mountains, on whose barren breast
The laboring clouds do often rest ;
Meadows trim with daisies pied,
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide.
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosom'd high in tufted trees,
Where, perhaps, some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighboring eyes.
Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks ;
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met,
Are at their savory dinner set,
Of herbs, and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses :
And then in haste her bower she leaves
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves ;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tann'd haycock in the mead,
Sometimes with secure delight,
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound .
To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the chequered shade ;
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holyday,
Till the live-long daylight fail ;
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How fairy Mab, the junkets eat :*

She was pinch'd and pull'd, she said ;
 And he by friar's lanthorn led ;
 Tells how the drudging Goblin sweat
 To earn his cream-bowl, duly set, ;
 When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
 His shadowy flail hath thrash'd the corn
 That ten-day laborers could not end ;
 Then lies him down, the lubber-fiend,
 And stretch'd out all the chimney's length,
 Basks at the fire his hairy strength ;
 And crop-full out of doors he flings,
 Ere the first cock his matin rings.
 Thus done the tales, to bed they creep
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep,
 Tower'd cities please us then,
 And the busy hum of men,
 Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
 In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold
 With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
 Rain influence, and judge the prize
 Of wit, or arms, while both contend
 To win her grace, whom all commend.
 There let Hymen oft appear
 In saffron robe, with taper clear ;
 And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
 With masque and antique pageantry :
*Such sights as youthful poets dream,
 On Summer eves by haunted stream.*
 Then to the well-trod stage anon,
 If Jonson's learned sock be on,
 Or sweetest Shakspeare, fancy's child,
Warble his native wood notes wild.
 And ever against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,

*In notes, with many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out,
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony ;*

* * * * *

These delights, if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

The remark of Dr. Johnson, that Milton placed *Il Penseroso* first, because he preferred the melancholy mood, must be the cause of his preference, if he had any that way, for it is quite evident that he was exquisitely sensible to the delicate charms of nature, and had an ear for these notes of

Linked sweetness long drawn out.

A R C A D E S.

Part of an entertainment to the Countess Dowager of Derby, at Harefield, by some noble persons of her family, who appear on the scene in pastoral habits, moving toward the seat of state, with this song.

SONG I.

Look, nymphs, and shepherds look,
What sudden blaze of majesty
Is that which we from hence descry,
Too divine to be mistook.

This, this is she
To whom our vows and wishes bend
Here our solemn search hath end.

Fame, that her high worth to raise
 Seem'd erst so lavish and profuse,
 We may justly now accuse
 Of detraction from her praise ;
 Less than half we find express'd,
 Envy bid conceal the rest.
 Mark what radiant state she spreads,
In circle round her shining throne,
Shooting her beams like silver threads ;
 This, this is she alone,
 Sitting like a goddess bright,
 In the center of her light.

Might she the wise Latona be,
 Or the tower'd Cybele,
 Mother of a hundred gods ?
 Juno dares not give her odds ;
 Who had thought this clime had held
 A deity so unparallel'd ?

As they come forward, the Genius of the wood appears, and turning toward them, speaks.

Gen. Stay, gentle swains, for though in this disguise
 I see bright honor sparkle through your eyes ;
 Of famous Arcady ye are, and sprung
 Of that renowned flood, so often sung,
 Divine Alpheus, who by secret sluice,
 Stole under seas to meet his Arethuse ;
 And ye, *the breathing roses of the wood,*
 Fair silver-buskin'd nymphs, as great and good,
 I know this quest of yours and free intent,
 Was all in honor and devotion meant,
 'To the great mistress of yon princely shrine,
 Whom, with low reverence, I adore as mine,
 And with all helpful service will comply

To further this night's glad solemnity ;
And lead ye where ye may more near behold
What shallow-searching fame has left untold ;
Which I full oft amidst these shades alone
Have sat to wonder at, and gaze upon ;
For know, by lot from Jove, *I am the Power*
Of this fair wood, and live in oaken bower,
To nurse the saplings tall, and curl the grove
With ringlets quaint, and wanton windings wove ;
And all my plants I save from nightly ill
Of noisome winds, and blushing vapors chill :
And from the boughs brush off the evil dew,
And heal the harms of thwarting thunder blue,
Or what the cross dire-looking planet smites,
Or hurtful worm with canker'd venom bites.
When evening gray doth rise, and fetch my round
Over the mount, and all this hallow'd ground ;
And early, ere the odorous breath of morn
Awakes the slumb'ring leaves, or tassel'd horn
Shakes the high thicket, haste I all about,
Number my ranks, and visit every sprout
With puissant words, and murmurs made to bless ;
But else in deep of night, *when drowsiness*
Hath lock'd up mortal sense, then listen I
To the celestial Siren's harmony,
That sit upon the nine infolded spheres,
And sing to those that hold the vital shears,
And turn the adamantine spindle round,
On which the fate of gods and men is wound.
Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie,
To lull the daughters of Necessity,
And keep unsteady Nature to her law,
And the low world in measur'd motion draw
After the heavenly tune, which none can hear
Of human mould, with gross unpurged ear ;
And yet such music worthiest were to blaze

The peerless height of her immortal praise,
 Whose luster leads us, and for her most fit,
 If my inferior hand or voice could hit
 Inimitable sounds : yet as we go,
 What'er the skill of lesser gods can show,
 I will assay, her worth to celebrate,
 And so attend ye toward her glittering state :
 Where ye may all that are of noble stem,
 Approach, and kiss her sacred vesture's hem.

SONG II.

O'er the smooth enamell'd green,
 Where no print of step hath been,
 Follow me, as I sing,
 And touch the warbled string,
 Under the shady roof
 Of branching elm star-proof, .
 Follow me,
 I will bring you where she sits,
 Clad in splendor as befits
 Her deity.
 Such a rural Queen
 All Arcadia hath not seen.

SONG III.

Nymphs and shepherds dance no more
 By sandy Landon's lilied banks :
 On old Lycæus or Cyllene hoar
 Trip no more in twilight ranks ;
 Through Erymanth your loss deplore,
 A better soil shall give ye thanks.
 From the stony Mænalus,
 Bring your flocks, and live with us,
 Here ye shall have greater grace,

To serve the Lady of this place.
 Though Syrinx your Pan's mistress were,
 Yet Syrinx well might wait on her.
 Such a rural Queen,
 All Arcadia hath not seen.

Compare

*But else, in deep of night, when drowsiness
 Hath lock'd up mortal sense, then listen I
 To the celestial Siren's harmony,*

with the passage from Shakspeare, page 275.

More instances are found in Milton than in any other poet, in which the "visible beauty of motion is wedded with the audible beauty of sound." In the modulation of his verse as in the association of thought, "music and sweet poetry agree, as doth the sister and the brother." As Gray has it, "Milton struck the deep toned shell," and Newton, who like Plato may be supposed to hear the music of the spheres, was enchanted with the strain.

FROM THE ODE ON NATIVITY.

When such music sweet
 Their hearts and ears did greet,
 As never was by mortal finger strook,
 Divinely-warbled voice
 Answering the stringed noise,
 As all their souls in blissful rapture took;
 The air such pleasure, loath to lose,
 With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly close.

Nature that heard such sound
 Beneath the hollow round
 Of Cynthia's seat, the airy region thrilling,
 Now was almost won

To think her part was done,
And that her reign had here its last fulfilling;
She knew such harmony alone
Could hold all heav'n and earth in happier union.

At last, surrounds their sight
A globe of circular light
That with long beams the shame-fac'd night array'd,
The helmed Cherubim,
And sworded Seraphim,
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings display'd,
Harping in loud and solemn quire,
With unexpressive notes to heaven's new born Heir.

Such music (as 'tis said,)
Before was never made,
But when of old the sons of morning sung,
While the Creator great
His constellations set,
And the well-balanc'd world on hinges hung;
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltring waves their oozy channel keep.

Ring out, ye crystal spheres,
Once bless our human ears,
If ye have power to touch our senses so,
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time,
And let the base of Heaven's deep organ blow;
And with your ninefold harmony
Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

For if such holy song
Inwrap our fancy long,
Time will run back and fetch the age of gold;
And speckled vanity

Will sicken soon and die,
 And leprous Sin will melt from earthly mould ;
 And Hell itself will pass away,
 And leave her dolorous mansions to the pressing day.

Yet Truth and Justice then
 Will down return to men
Orb'd in a rainbow ; and like glories wearing,
 Mercy will sit between,
 Thron'd in celestial sheen,
 With radiant feet the tissue clouds down steering ;
 And Heaven, as at some festival,
 Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall.

AT A SOLEMN MUSIC.

Blest pair of Sirens, pledges of Heaven's joy,
 Sphere-born harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse,
 Wed your divine sounds, and mix'd power employ
 Dead things with imbreath'd sense able to pierce ;
 And to our high-raisd phantasy present
 That undisturbed song of pure content,
 Aye, sung before the sapphire-color'd throne
 To him that sits thereon,
 With saintly shout, and solemn jubilee,
 When the bright Seraphim in burning row,
 Their loud up-lifted angel trumpets blow,
 And the cherubic host, in thousand quires,
 Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,
 With those just spirits that wear victorious palms.
 Hymns devout and holy psalms
 Singing everlastingly :
 That we on earth, with undiscording voice,
 May rightly answer that melodious noise ;
 As once we did, till disproportion'd sin
 Jarr'd against Nature's chime, and with harsh din

Broke the fair music that all creatues made
 To their great Lord, whose love their motion sway'd
 In perfect diapason, whilst they stood,
 In first obedience, and their state of good.
 O may we soon again renew that song,
 And keep in tune with Heaven, till God, ere long
 To his celestial consort, us unite,
 To live with him, and sing in endless morn of light !

S O N G .

ON MAY MORNING.

Now the bright morning star, day's harbinger,
 Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her
 The flow'ry May, who from her green lap throws
 The yellow cowslip, and pale primrose.
 Hail, bounteous May, that dost inspire
 Mirth and youth, and warm desire ;
 Woods and groves are of thy dressing,
 Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.
 Thus we salute thee with our early song,
 And welcome thee, and wish thee long.

S O N N E T .

O nightingale, that on yon bloomy spray
 Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,
 Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,
 While the jolly hours lead on propitious May.
 Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,
 First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
 Portend success in love: O, if Jove's will
 Have link'd that amorous power to thy soft lay,
 Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate
 Foretell my hopeless doom in some grove nigh ;
 As thou from year to year hast sung too late

For my relief, yet had'st no reason why ;
Whether the muse, or Love call thee his mate,
Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

Milton did not write for the age in which he lived, in any sense. His poetry was not adored by his contemporaries ; the poetry of Cowley, the luster of whose fame, in its dawn, eclipsed Milton's, was preferred to it. His, are the only great productions of these times ; the only works that were full of nature and sentiment, and that evince the re-union of taste and genius. The characteristic of the general poetry of his age was wit and gayety ; it consisted of sonnets and fragments of song. Literature was wanting in elegance and dignity, in taste and imagination, in vigor of sentiment and strength of thought. Milton stands alone, and differs from his race, as much in his powers of execution, as in the *nature* of his subject. He was surrounded by a circle of wits ; Waller, Suckling, and Rochester belong to the same period ; but his "soul was like a star and dwelt apart." Butler who was born four years later, was a greater wit than any other writer in the language. Prior and Swift, of the same century, (though born in the last half,) are full of humor and polished wit.

Dryden, who was born twenty-three years later, and is signalized as the Father of English criticism, resembled Milton in his strength of thought, elegance of diction, and variety of versification, but he had not the tenderness, the grandeur of conception, nor the surpassing perception of beauty that Milton had. This, however, is the second great name of the seventeenth century,

and he is, in a manner, the founder of the poetry of the eighteenth century. He had neither the wit, the fancy, nor the humor of the age that preceded him. The wealth of his language is immense. His odes are the most perfect specimens, in the language, of lyrical elegance and power. The following specimen, says Mr. Ellis, which seems to have escaped the notice of former collators, is written with all the characteristic fire and spirit of its author:

FROM THE TRAGEDY OF ŒDIPUS.

Invocation of the Ghost of Laius, by Tiresias.

Tir. Choose the darkest part o' the grove :
Such as ghosts at noon-day love.
Dig a trench, and dig it nigh
Where the bones of Laius lie :
Altars raised of turf or stone,
Will th' infernal powers have none.—
Answer me, if this be done.

Cho. 'Tis done.

Tir. Is the sacrifice made fit?—
Draw her backward to the pit;
Draw the barren heifer back :
Barren let her be, and black.
Cut the curl'd hair that grows
Full betwixt her horns and brows :
And turn your faces from the sun.—
Answer me, if this be done.

Cho. 'Tis done.

Tir. Pour in blood, and blood-like wine,
To mother Earth and Proserpine ;
Mingle milk into the stream :
Snatch a brand from funeral pile ;
Toss it in to make them boil :

And turn your faces from the sun.—

Answer me, if all be done.

Cho. All is done.

* * * * *

S O N G .

1. Hear, ye sullen powers, below!

Hear, ye taskers of the dead!

2. You that boiling cauldrons blow!

You that scum the molten lead!

2. You that pinch with red-hot tongs!

1. You that drive the trembling hosts

Of poor, poor ghosts

With sharpen'd prongs!

2. You that thrust them off the brim!

You that plunge them when they swim!

'Till they drown;

'Till they go

On a row

Down, down, down,

Ten thousand, thousand, thousand fathoms low.

Chor. 'Till they drown,——

1. Music for a while

Shall your cares beguile:

Wondering how your pains were eas'd!

2. And disdaining to be pleas'd!

3. 'Till Alecto free the dead

From their eternal bands;

'Till the snakes drop from her head,

And whip from out her hands.

1. Come away,

Do not stay,

But obey

While we play,

For hell's broke up, and ghosts have holy-day.

Chor. Come away,——

1. Laus! 2. Laius! 3. Laius!

1. Hear! 2. Hear! 3. Hear!

Tir. Hear and appear!

By the Fates that spun thy thread!

Chor. Which are three,——

Tir. By the Furies fierce and dread!

Chor. Which are three,——

Tir. By the judges of the dead!

Chor. Which are three,——

Three times three,——

Tir. By hell's blue flame!

By the Stygian lake!

And by Demogorgon's name

At which ghosts quake!

Hear and appear!

POETS AND POETRY

OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.



IT were no small task to write a complete history of all the productions of any single age of English literature, since the introduction of Printing into England in the fifteenth century, since which time the Press has been constantly pouring forth its flood of publications. The accumulation of four centuries, therefore, affords an abundance of materials to work upon. The task is, however, greatly diminished—or, at least, rendered more easy of execution, by the well-established custom of the historian, to embrace a whole age in a single paragraph; and if then there happens to be more than can well be disposed of in his design, or which, from his ignorance, he does not know how to treat, it is at once disposed of in a manner, easier still; by considering it altogether unworthy of notice.

The value of the literature of any age is, generally, in the inverse ratio to the amount of production. The best works appear during a comparative dearth. After the language has become settled and fixed, and taste is perfected, it is of no benefit to recast the same material, or change the forms of literature, and nothing

can be considered an addition to it, which does not add something to its element; which does not add something of thought, or sentiment, or fancy, or imagination.

The poetry of the eighteenth century, is all fancy and refinement. The reign of Elizabeth was the age of feeling, romance and imagination. This was followed by the school of metaphysical poetry, which was succeeded by that of wit, humor, and gayety. Then, in its turn, followed the age of refinement and artificial elegance. In tracing the history of the language, we observe that from the thirteenth century to the age of Shakspeare, (in whom we behold the complete development of both,) the powers of the intellectual man were gradually developing. Intellectually, he was one who could stand up in the face of nature, and say, "I am a man." After his time, the intellect becomes dormant. Intellectual life no longer seems to be such an absorbing and sacred thing. What before were matters of interest, become the subject of mirth. The sacred faith of romance became the sport of wit.

As though, at the close of the seventeenth century, sentiment and nature had become exhausted, the poetry of the following era becomes destitute of them. In a great measure, regardless of nature, the poets of the eighteenth century were intent only in improving upon the models of their ancestors.

The poetry of this era addresses itself to the eye and ear: it seldom exhibits a stroke for the imagination, or a word for the heart. It is all elegance and harmony.

The most obvious distinction of the poetry of this

period, is the great number of names, all nearly of equal luster, which it presents. It presents to the *natural eye* a constellation, studded almost exclusively with stars of the second magnitude. Among an infinitude of inferior names, which are scarcely visible by their own light, shine forth with almost equal brilliancy, Pope, Goldsmith, Collins, Gray, Akenside, Young, Thomson, and Cowper.

The remarkable equality of genius which the poetry of this age possesses, is relieved by its vast variety of forms and subjects. Every object in nature and art become subjects of poetry. The mixed modes of artificial life are described with the minuteness and certainty that belong only to the laws of nature. Genius was now controlled by taste, and writers pleased with the grace and beauty of style, as they had before charmed and ravished with their strength of thought.

Pope, whose name has become almost inseparable from the cant about "nature and art," is the leading and most brilliant light of this period. His name is identified with the literature of the eighteenth century. His name and Dryden's are unceremoniously forced into a question of criticism, as the turning point in poetry. According to Mr. Macaulay's solution of the question, Dryden was necessarily a second rate poet, because of the improvements in the language, and the development of the "critical faculty."

To this it may be replied that abstract terms and terms of art, together with critical dissection, war against the spirit of poetry, but do not determine the

impossibility of the poet. The poet is superior to the common tendency of things, and requires no greater force of genius to triumph over the abundance, than, the poverty of language.

The poet, under all circumstances, is one who catches the images of things as they rise in his own breast, and in painting them, and conveying them to other minds, language is plastic in his hands. Having an innate sense of the true and beautiful, whose forms haunt his mind like a fairy vision, his ideas both in their conception and communication, are in a great measure independent of the associations of language. If he has the delicate sensibility and power of thought of the true poet, he will attest the dignity of his nature in spite of every thing. If he acts from the impulse, and possesses the power,

“Of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion, and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things,”

he will be a poet in any clime, and in any stage of civilization. His soul will not do homage to caprice and conventional forms. He worships, not in temples built with hands; “but on the sky-paved precipices where the winds strike their strong harps, and in the joy, the thrill, the melody of nature, hymn to heaven.” In the truth and harmony of his own soul, he holds

communion with nature, and his birth is not to be determined by geographical lines, or chronological dates.

As the point, "what is poetry?" which was raised in the discussion of the question whether Pope was a poet or not, has not been settled to satisfaction, his character as a poet is uncertain with regard to the canons of criticism. His genius, nevertheless, has left an indelible impress upon his age. He had, according to the opinion of Dr. Johnson, in proportions nicely adjusted to each other, all the qualities that constitute genius: invention, imagination and judgment; together with "colors of language always before him, ready to decorate his matter with every grace of elegant expression." He had fancy, rather than imagination;—fancy, capable of combining the most delicate and ethereal forms; rather than imagination, which seizes the elements, the analogies of things, and gives form to them, imaging the unknown. He had the finest perceptive powers, a playful fancy, and a delicate sense of the comic. He had the capacity of blending a great variety of forms, rather than the power of forming new. He did not depend upon the "unadorned beauty" of his verse, or the simple majesty of conception, for effect. He throws around his most passionate effusions, the tinsel of rhetoric.

Pope had more refinement, but not the strength and originality of thought of Dryden, whom he studied as his model.

If Pope is not a true poet, he displays all the poetic forms of language; he is master of the poetry of thought, if not of sentiment, he displays all the fine

delicacies of expression. For taste, elegance, graces of style, sound sense, and musical versification, he is not equalled by any writer in the language. These, together with his condensation of thought, are his great characteristics. His power of condensation was great: he could compress a precept into a few words, which would require thrice the number to express it in prose: but he had not the native energy of thought that makes his images *breathe*, and his words *burn*.

He had not the humor or the caustic wit of Gay, who was born in the same year with him. His Elegies were surpassed by Tickell, whose Elegy on the death of Mr. Addison, in the opinion of Goldsmith, is one of the finest in the language, and was preferred by Johnson to Milton's *Lycidas*.

Swift was more of a wit than a poet, and as to style, he was the very antipode of Pope. There is greater purity and precision in his language, but it is destitute of grace or ornament. His prose was necessarily better than his poetry: for poetry discloses more of one's own image, and he had a bad heart. His rhapsody on Poetry, however, was considered by Goldsmith as one of the best versified poems in the language: and his Elegy *on his own death* has much beauty and tenderness.

Blair's poem on the Grave, is one of the best specimens of blank verse that the eighteenth century produced. His style is free and perspicuous, while his imagery is bold and striking. With great vigor of thought, he displays great tenderness and sensibility. Blair's Grave, in the opinion of Southey, was com-

posed in imitation of Young's Night Thoughts, but it possesses more native energy of thought, and more tenderness than the poem of Young. His passage on Beauty is inimitable for tenderness and beauty :

Look how the fair one weeps !—*the conscious tears*
Stand thick as dew-drops on the bells of flowers.

In his most nervous and expressive passages, there is an unsurpassed delicacy of sentiment. Though the expression that friendship is the "solder of society," has been objected to as a vulgarism. The passage in which it appears, possesses great beauty, though its theme is hacknied.

Friendship ! mysterious cement of the soul ;
 Sweetner of life, and solder of society,
 I owe thee much. Thou hast deserved from me
 Far, far beyond what I can ever pay.
 Oft have I proved the labors of thy love,
 And the warm efforts of the gentle heart,
 Anxious to please.—O ! when my friend and I
 In some thick wood have wander'd heedless on,
 Hid from the vulgar eye, and sat us down
 Upon the sloping cowslip-cover'd bank,
 Where the pure limpid stream has slid along
 In grateful errors through the underwood,
 Sweet murmuring ; methought the shrill-tongu'd thrush
 Mended his song of love : the sooty blackbird
Mellow'd his pipe, and softened every note ;
 The eglantine smell'd sweeter, and the rose
 Assumed a dye more deep, whilst every flower
 Vied with its fellow-plant in luxury
 Of dress.—Oh ! then the longest summer's day
 Seem'd too, too much in haste : *still the full heart*
Had not imparted half : 'twas happiness
 Too exquisite to last.

The gloom, which the austere religion of Blair infused into his representations of life and nature, disappeared in the works of Thomson. He painted with a pencil dipped in the radiant hues of morning. He dwells amid woodland hymns, and music that is

The native voice of undissembled joy ;

and riots in the "verdure of the morn."

Thomson always delights: we follow him with enchanted steps through all seasons of the year, and throughout all climes. We are equally delighted, whether reclining with him beneath the "spreading tamarind," in the citron groves of Pomona, or dwelling beneath the frigid zone,

Where, for relentless months, continual night
Holds o'er the glitt'ring waste her starry reign.

The poet's soul holds intimate communion with universal nature, and at all times, and under all circumstances; whether in winter or summer; in sunshine or storm; whether in the dark waste, or on the sky-paved precipice, there goes up from the altar of his heart, one continual hymn to nature, and to heaven! Nature springs into new life beneath his magic pencil, and becomes more pleasing, more pathetic, from the hues of his own imagination, which he throws around it. As the mind expatiates upon the grand design of nature, which the poet has thrown into a single view, in his Seasons, its powers are expanded, and the soul sympathises with, and finds beauty and fitness in all forms and conditions of being. He is

original in his mode of thinking, and expression: "his numbers, his pauses, his diction, are of his own growth, without transcription, without imitation." "He thinks in a peculiar train," continues Dr. Johnson, "and he thinks always as a man of genius. He looks round on nature and life, with the eye which nature bestows only on the poet; the eye that distinguishes in every thing presented to its view, whatever there is on which imagination can delight to be detained; and with a mind, that at once comprehends the vast, and attends to the minute." Amid his strength and splendor, his style is sometimes harsh, but goodness and beauty were a passion to him, and he embodied their spirit in surpassing forms. The poetry of Dr. Watts was the poetry of a soul longing to be filled with truth and divine grace; Thomson's poetry was the excess of spirit, the effervescence of truth and beauty.

The music in his Castle of Indolence, is like that in Spenser's Bower of Bliss :

Sometimes the pencil, in cool airy halls,
Bade the gay bloom of vernal landscapes rise,
Or Autumn's varied shades imbrown the walls :
Now the black tempest strikes th' astonish'd eyes,
Now down the steep the flashing torrent flies ;
The trembling sun now plays o'er ocean blue,
And now rude mountains frown amid the skies ;
Whate'er Lorraine light-touched with soft'ning hue,
Or savage Rosa dash'd, or learned Poussin drew.

Each sound, too, her to languishment inclined,
Lull'd the weak bosom, and induced ease.
Aerial music in the warbling wind,

At distance rising oft by small degrees,
 Nearer and nearer came, 'till o'er the trees
It hung, and breathed such soul-dissolving airs,
 As did, alas ! with soft perdition please :
 Entangled deep in its enchanting snares,
 The listening heart forgot all duties, and all cares.

A certain music, never known before,
 Here lull'd the pensive melancholy mind ;
 Full easily obtained : behoves no more,
 But, sidelong, to the gently-waving wind,
 To lay the well-tuned instrument reclin'd :
 From which with airy flying fingers light,
 Beyond each mortal touch, the most refined,
 The god of winds drew sounds of deep delight :
 Whence, with just cause, the Harp of Æolus it hight.

Ah me ! what hand can touch the strings, so fine !
 Who up the lofty diapason roll
 Such sweet, such sad, such solemn airs divine,
Then let them down again into the soul ?
 Now rising love they fann'd, now pleasing dole,
 They breathed in tender musings through the heart ;
 And now a graver, sacred strain they stole,
 As when seraphic hands a hymn impart :
 Wild-warbling nature all, above the reach of art !

“ Ambrose Philips, the pastoral rival of Pope,” has some “ inconceivably fine ” passages, and a smooth versification, but his Pastorals, which Pope satirized, mimicked rather than copied nature. His translations are so felicitous, that Warton was induced to think they had been retouched by Addison. Welsted, who was also the victim of Pope's spleen, had almost equal merit with Phillips, but his fame withered in the scorching flame.

Crawfurd was one of the sweetest lyrical poets, and an ingenious and delightful miscellaneous writer. His verses upon the "Tweed side," are written in the same measure with Cowper's notable lines.

What beauties does Flora disclose !
 How sweet are her smiles upon Tweed ;
 Yet Mary's, still sweeter than those
 Both nature and fancy exceed.
 Nor daisy, nor sweet-blushing rose,
 Not all the gay flowers of the field,
 Not Tweed, gliding gently through those,
 Such beauty and pleasure does yield.

The warblers are heard in the grove,
 The linnet, the lark, and the thrush,
 The black bird, and sweet-cooing dove,
With music enchant every bush.
 Come, let us go forth to the mead,
 Let us see how the primroses spring ;
 We'll lodge in some village on Tweed,
 And love with the feather'd folks sing.

* * * * *

Gilbert West was a bold and original thinker ; and his diction was chaste and manly. Southey is inclined to regard him as the father of the school of Gray, Mason, Akenside, and the Wartons. He has strength of thought, but his imagery is not vivid.

Collins has the true fire of the poet. His Eclogues are equal to any thing of the kind that has been written at so early an age. There is nothing commonplace in his poetry ; every thing is high-wrought and imaginative. Like Milton, with whom he is compared

by Campbell, there is a remoteness in his associations; he aims to embody the unknown. Collins and Gray are, alike, fond of the ideal element of poetry; they lead us into the enchanted ground of poetic fabling, and entrance us with the life and beauty of their ethereal creations. They have surpassed, in the fire and vigor of genius, all the poets who have written only short poems. They both approach sublimity, but in most of their flights they betray a fondness for the ornaments and mechanism of poetry. Gray's poems are high-wrought, burnished gems, and are the best models of poetic expression. The poems of Collins are gems of nearly the same luster; they are not polished so highly, but they were wrought in a higher fervor of genius.

In their lyrical performances, they rank next to Dryden, the greatest of English lyric writers. They have not all his wildness, his fire, and variety of versification, but they follow him at no mean distance. With minds amply stored with learning, they possessed the richest poetic veins, which they worked into the most lovely forms, fraught with chaste, and noble imagery. Gray has not the native imagination, the creative energy of thought to make him the architect of a vast poetic design, yet he has an originality and a power of execution that entitle him to a place second only to the very first rank of genius; and the sweetness and majesty of his versification are unsurpassed.

The delightful Shenstone, was possessed of refined sentiment, and a cultivated taste, but he was a pleasing essayist, rather than a charming poet. His School Mis-

treſs is unique, and a maſter-piece of its kind : “ it is a happy effuſion in which the poet has excelled himſelf.” His genius was not forcible, but he was a cloſe obſerver of men and things.

Churchill was a rough, cauſtic ſatiriſt, and as abrupt as Shenſtone was refined. He had the free, energetic manner of Dryden ; the felicity of Pope, and more humor than either, though he never emulated their moſt happy poetic flights. “ He is coarſe, vigorous, ſurly, and ſlovenly,”

“ Full of gall,
Wormwood and ſulphur, ſharp and toothed withal.”

Young’s Night Thoughts, ſays Goldſmith, are ſpoken of indifferently, either with exaggerated applauſe or contempt, as the reader’s diſpoſition is either turned to mirth or melancholy. He is allied to the metaphyſical ſchool of poets ; he has carried antithetiſis and conceit farther than any other writer in the language. He betrays them in every paſſage, but the moſt egregious inſtance of conceit that was ever written, is where he aſſimilates the conſtellations of the heavens to gems, to ſtud a ring for the finger of their Creator.

Falconer gave birth to ſome refined viſions of fancy, and with them he introduced into our poetry naval characters, naval incidents and catastrophe. His ſea phrases are not very congenial to the ſpirit of poetry, but they give a truthfulneſs to his poem, which impreſſes the reader with the charm of reality.

Akenside had all the qualities of a great poet. Notwithſtanding the exceptions of the critics, his Pleaſures

of Imagination is a rich store house of the finest fancies and most splendid images. He has given form and life to the abstractions of the mind; he was happy in the execution of his object, which was,

“ To paint the finest features of the mind,
And to most subtle and mysterious things,
Give color, strength, and motion.”

His verse is free and harmonious, and has great strength: it flows like a limpid and majestic stream. His inscriptions for Chaucer and Shakspeare are the best productions of this class in the language. The closing passage on Shakspeare, is as true as it is touching and beautiful:

———— Here then, round
His monument, with reverence while ye stand,
Say to each other, “ This was Shakspeare’s form,
Who walked in every path of human life:
Felt every passion; and to all mankind
Doth now, will ever; that experience yield
Which his own genius only could acquire.”

Chatterton was a youthful prodigy, and the brevity of his life, and its tragic end, served to heighten the wonder felt for his astonishing powers. His genius was like a meteor, that strikes the beholder with amazement, and disappears before the novelty of its mysterious appearance has ceased to affect: such was the career of

———— “ Chatterton, the marvellous boy:
The sleepless soul, that perished in his pride.”

Smollett’s poetry is full of delicacy and fine feeling,

but his fame, as a writer, rests upon his charming novels. They however, are a delightful combination of the elements of humorous and grave poetry. Like Lord Lyttleton's, his prose writings will be remembered when his verses are forgotten.

Goldsmith is one of the most felicitous and delightful writers in the language, both in verse and prose. He neither seeks for ornament, nor is regardless of the delicacies of style ; he pleases by a simple exhibition of nature in her most familiar and fascinating forms, and he always engages the affections, and delights the imagination. Without affectation, and without conceit, he gives us the emotions as they rise in his own breast, with the images as they impress his mind. He preserves throughout the manner and the style which are most grateful to the contemplative mood, but he can change the tone of his thoughts from the severest gravity to the most playful mirth, with the greatest ease. His good sense never betrays him, and his kind heart beats in every line. He does not excite our wonder with a vast fertility of genius or lofty design, but he delights us with the most lovely visions. He does not astonish us with an awful grandeur of conception, but inspires our admiration by all lovely images, and engages our affections by endeared associations. He is not impetuous ; he displays none of the fitful ebullitions of feeling, but a spirit of severe and calm reflection hallows his thoughts, which are portrayed in the sweetest and most chaste colors of language. He is not metaphysical—to his philosophic spirit there is joined a depth of subdued feeling, which gives to his

creations the freshness of nature, with some of the finest touches of pathos. He seldom rises into sublimity, and never sinks into insipidity: he is always in the region of taste, elegance and beauty. He dispensed at once with the machinery of poetry, and the whole race of fabulous beings. He does not lead us into the enchanted land of pure imagination, and he exerts himself so little to make us visionary, that we are inclined to give to his inferences the certainty of philosophic deductions. He is characterized by the ease, simplicity, elegance, beauty, and the harmony of his verse.

Armstrong possessed poetic feeling, and an affluent fancy, which could vest the dryest subject of science with grace and beauty. As a writer of blank verse, he was equal to Young. He had not the originality of Thompson, nor the energy and harmony of Akenside. Like Mason, he occasionally exhibits some fine stroke of nature in her untamed grandeur; and they are both allied to the school of the Wartons, who are distinguished for their love of the beautiful and romantic.

Cowper, like Goldsmith, dispensed with the machinery of poetry; but unlike him, he was regardless of the graces of composition. He was an ardent admirer of nature in her simple majesty. He was possessed of deep sincere feeling, of sound thought with simplicity of expression. He is not so gloomy as Young, but has more tenderness with less wit. His paintings of nature have not the ideal beauty of Thomson, but they are more graphic and minute. English literature is indebted to the inspiration of Cowper's poetry for a new school of poetry: from him is deduced that of the succeeding century.

POETRY

OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.



The poetry of the eighteenth century abounded in the poetic forms of language, as distinguished from the poetry of thought. To excel in delicacies of expression, and to prove themselves masters of the charms of style, was the highest ambition of the writers of this period, and they did not attempt to produce anything touching or deeply interesting. Dryden perfected the language, and Pope improved upon perfection itself. The most inferior poets of his school, and of those times, were scrupulous about the dress of their thoughts, and most of them attained a faultless style. Gardening and the fine arts generally, were carried to the last degree of refinement: nature was lost sight of in the adornment of art, and every thing was calculated to please the eye and ear without affecting the heart. The influence of the institutions of the middle ages, which were calculated to engender fiction, had ceased; the race of fabulous beings, fairies, genii, and gnomes, with their charms, incantations and enchantments, had departed; the pastoral character, the minstrel and the troubadour had disappeared, the distinctive

characters of society had softened, and become blended, and the elements of poetry were few and simple. To these, obedient to the dictates of a fastidious taste, the poet sedulously employed himself.

The charms of language, and the music of verse ceased at length to interest: the eye was satiated with beauty, and the ear with sweet sounds, and a new path to fame was marked out.

After the poetry of natural scenery and rural life, which succeeded that of wit, had become exhausted, men returned again to the fictions of thought and feeling.

The poetry of this century is characterized for sweetness, sensibility, delicacy of feeling. Coleridge, Campbell, Wordsworth, Scott, Byron, Shelley and Keats are names of magic. They are enshrined in every heart: their works are too popular to require comment; they are not confined to the shelf; they are incorporated with real life, and form a part of the spirit of the times.

The elegance and polish of Rogers' poetry allies him to a preceding age. His *Pleasures of Memory* have a higher finish, with less power of thought than the *Pleasures of Imagination*. He had the taste and genuine simplicity of Burns. He did not possess a creative imagination, but the purity, the refined sentiment, and the harmony of his verse, give it an indestructible charm.

The romance, the tenderness, and the sublimity of Coleridge, are equal to the elegance and grace of Rogers. Coleridge had a mind that seized the elements of things, separated them from their concomitants,

and formed them to an ideal standard. He had the subtlety and dreamy wildness of the German mind, and he infused into poetry a spiritual philosophy, and gave to it lucid and gorgeous imagery. He is the sweetest and most musical of poets.

Campbell is the last representative of the elaborate eloquence of Pope. He is emphatically the poet of rhetoric : his patriotism and his thrilling numbers will always find a welcome reception in the human breast. His *Pleasures of Hope*, and *Lochiel's* warning are the offspring of the noblest enthusiasm, and have a wild sweep of harmonious energy. Crabbe's poetry has as much energy of thought, without the tenderness, the hope and harmony : neither is his taste as correct or his fancy as fine as Campbell's.

Southey's early poetry is his best : the vein of enthusiasm, of mild and touching moral reflection that pervades this, renders it more pleasing than the impressive grandeur, and the abruptness of his later works. The wild fancy, and the marvellous invention of these give them an air of heroism and magnificence too extravagant for credulity, and too much affected for admiration.

Such works display the master mind, but they do not come home to the heart like the fine fancies, and the joyous melodies of Moore. Moore has the most sparkling wit, the most playful and brilliant fancy of any writer of our age. What tenderness, what beauty, what melody breathes in every line? He is full of vivacity ; he has the life of the most elastic spirit, but not the vigor of the most contemplative mind.

He has as much wit, a richer vein of fancy, and more intensity of feeling than Suckling. He has a more caustic vein of irony, without the spleen of Swift.

Wordsworth is no wit, but the want of it is more than made up in his delicate sensibility to the impression of beauty. His mind is "a mansion for all lovely forms;" his memory

———"As a dwelling-place,
For all sweet sounds and harmonies,"

and his heart has kept "the holy forms of young imagination pure." He looks on nature with a contemplative eye, with chastened and subdued feeling, and he feels "the joy of elevated thoughts, and a sense sublime," which the true poet feels. He excels all other poets in elevating what is low, and magnifying what is small, and he can rise into grandeur and sublimity by the simple majesty of thought, and without the least apparent effort. He displays profundity of genius in the execution of his simplest subjects. He has a kind heart, "the sad music of humanity" is not "harsh nor grating" to his ear.

Mrs. Barbauld has the most classic taste of any female writer in the language. She has been termed, and with great significance, the female Johnson. She has the Johnsonian polish, with greater ease of expression, and exquisite tenderness. She has imagination, pathos and sublimity. Hannah More's poetry has a severe terseness, and is imbued with a spiritual philosophy. Baillie has a great dramatic power, and gorgeous imagery. Landon abounds in fresh flowers,

and sweet odors, and the poems of Hemans are sparkling and gem-like. What a lovely constellation of female genius do they form ! The rich wreaths which they have added to English literature, give immortal honor to the sex.

Shelley's unique sensibility and delicacy ally him to these paragons of intellectual beauty. His organization, was almost too delicate to "bear the weight of the superincumbent air." By acting in obedience to his own notions of justice, he was at war with everything that was not founded in reason, though his life does not entirely coincide with his aspirations after human perfectability. His is the poetry of sentiment and intellect, of intense feeling, and the most ethereal spirit. He, with his strong sympathy and ethereal genius, is the very being that he likens his Skylark to :

————— *A poet hidden*
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
'Till the word is wrought
To sympathize with hopes and fears it heeded not.

He has as fine a fancy as Coleridge, with more intense and lofty feeling. He has not the artistic grace of Coleridge, nor the classic taste and elegance of Leigh Hunt, but he has more rapture, more brilliancy than either, and he can accumulate images with imposing grandeur.

Keats was even more sensitive than Shelley, without his fortitude and native independence of character. He possessed originality of thought, but he had not sufficient energy of character to give perfection to

his works, and stamp them with the impress of genius. For passages of delicate poetic painting and chaste beauty, his works cannot be opened amiss: as in the opening of *Endymion* :

A thing of beauty is a joy forever :
 Its loveliness increases ; it will never
 Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep
 A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
 Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
 Therefore on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flow'ry band to bind us to the earth,
 Spite of despondence, of th' inhuman dearth
 Of noble natures, of gloomy days,
 Of all the unhealthy and o'er darken'd ways
 Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
 Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
 From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
 Tries old and young, sprouting a shady boon
 For simple sleep; and such are daffodils
 With the green wood they live in; and clear rills
 That for themselves a cooling covert make
 'Gainst the hot season; the wild-forest brake,
 Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms.
 And such, too, is the grandeur of the dooms
 We have imagined of the mighty dead;
 All lovely tales that we have heard or read.
 An endless fountain of immortal drink
 Pouring into us from the heaven's brink.

His verse flows like an unruffled stream, and surfeits with its sweetness. He has not variety or great expansion. His fancy dwells amid perpetual sweets and visions of solemn beauty. He only tasted of the pure fountains, but he gave evidence that if he had lived, he

would have "overwhelmed himself in poetry." If the steeds of his young imagination could

*Paw up against the light, and do strange deeds
Upon the clouds,*

what might not his maturer faculties have accomplished?

Rash criticism hastened the death of the sensitive Keats, but it warmed Byron into life, who has suffered and survived more malignant criticism than any other man, living or dead. The cry was up against him, before he had fairly presented himself as the subject of criticism. And the clamor seems destined to continue with the eternity of his pure fame. The voice that is raised in his behalf is always feeble, and if any thing good is said of him, it is coupled with qualifications and exceptions that doubly outweigh the whole. But faint praises and malignity are alike harmless to him. The admiration of his genius seems to be made a crime in morals, and he is the best man that can display the greatest aversion. True, Byron without dissimulation, wrote out what was in him: he has given us the exact image of his own being, but there seems to be a strange proneness to look upon the dark side of the picture, and a wonderful blindness to its lines of surpassing beauty and loveliness. He has not deprived us of the power of choice, and we may receive the good without cursing him.

Byron, according to his own theory of poetry, was no poet, and he acknowledged himself inferior to Pope; nevertheless, he was the greatest genius of his age, and in certain characteristics of genius he sur-

passes all other men. He had the strongest conception imaginable, and the richest mind. What other men elaborated only with the greatest effort, came to him without any, and apparently without having been sought. All the elements of nature were at his command, and he could breathe them forth in images of beauty or terror, of grace or sublimity, of loveliness or deformity. He could bind the "waves beneath him as a steed that knows its rider:" he gave to "every mountain a tongue," and made them answer "from their misty shrouds back to the joyous Alps," and his imagination "peopled the stars with beings bright as their own beams." In his communion with the past, the crumbling ruins of time fall around him; he stands upon the grave of nations, and calls back the departed spirit, and stamps their deeds with immortality:

But these are deeds which should not pass away,
And names that must not wither, though the earth
Forgets her empires with a just decay,
The enslavers, and the enslaved, their death and birth;
The high, the mountain-majesty of worth
Should be, and shall, survivor of its wo,
And from its immortality look forth
In the sun's face, like yonder Alpine snow,
Imperishably pure beyond all things below.

"Lord Byron's poetry," says Mr. Hazlitt, "is as morbid as Mr. Moore's is careless and dissipated. He has more depth of passion, more force and impetuosity, but the passion is always of the same unaccountable character, at once violent and sullen, fierce and

gloomy. It is not the passion of a mind struggling with misfortune, or the hopelessness of its desires, but of a mind preying upon itself, and disgusted with, or indifferent to, all other things. There is nothing less poetical than this sort of unaccommodating selfishness. There is nothing more repulsive than this sort of ideal absorption of all the interests of others, of the goods and ills of life, in the ruling passion and moody abstraction of a single mind, as if it would make it self the center of the universe, and there was nothing worth cherishing, but its intellectual diseases. It is like a cancer, eating into the heart of poetry." No better reply can be made to this piece of ungenerous criticism, than Byron himself affords :

To fly from, need not be to hate, mankind ;
All are not fit with them to stir and toil,
Nor is it discontent to keep the mind
Deep in its fountain, lest it overboil
In the hot throng, where we become the spoil
Of our infection, till too late and long
We may deplore and struggle with the coil,
In wretched interchange of wrong for wrong,
'Midst a contentious world, striving when none are strong.

There, in a moment we may plunge our years
In fatal penitence, and in the blight
Of our own soul, turn all our blood to tears,
And color things to come with hues of night ;
The race of life becomes a hopeless flight,
To those that walk in darkness : on the sea
The boldest steer, but where their ports invite,
But there are wanderers o'er Eternity,
Whose bark drives on and on, and anchor'd ne'er shall be

Is it not better, then, to be alone,
 And love earth only for its earthly sake ?
 By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone,
 Or the pure bosom of its nursing lake,
 Which feeds it as a mother who doth make
 A fair but froward infant, her own care,
 Kissing its cries away, as these awake ;—
 Is it not better thus our lives to wear,
 Than join the crushing crowd, doom'd to inflict or bear ?

*I live not in myself, but become
 Portion of that around me : and to me*
 High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
 Of human cities, torture : I can see
 Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
 A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,
 Classed among creatures, when the soul can flee,
 And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
 Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain.

And thus I am absorb'd, and this is life ;
 I look upon the peopl'd desert past,
 As on a place of agony and strife,
 Where, for some sin, to sorrow I was cast
 To act and suffer, *but remount at last*
With a fresh pinion ; which I feel to spring,
 Though young, yet waxing vigorous, as the blast
 Which it could cope with, on delighted wing,
 Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round our being cling.

And when, at length, the mind shall be all free,
 From what it hates in this degraded form,
 Rest of its carnal life, save what shall be
 Existent happier in the fly and worm,—
 When elements to elements conform,
 And dust is as it should be, shall I not
 Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more warm ?

*The bodiless thought ? The Spirit of each spot !
Of which, even now, I share at times the immortal lot ?*

*Are not the mountains, waves, and skies a part
Of me and of my soul, as I of them ?
Is not the love of these deep in my heart,
With a pure passion ? should I not condemn
All objects, if compared with these ? and stem
A tide of suffering, rather than forego
Such feelings for the hard and worldly phlegm
Of those whose eyes are only turned below,
Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts which dare not glow!*
CHILDE HAROLD, c. iii. s. 69—75.

Is this not poetry ? It is “madness beautiful !” This is poetry of the highest cast, giving “erring deeds and thoughts a heavenly hue.” For scenes of severe grandeur, mellowed with the most delicate traces of fancy, this poem can hardly be opened amiss. His poetry, like the Alpine scenery which he describes, is an exact copy of nature. It is not all flowers, nectar sweets, bright waters, and starry nights, but the delicate mingles with the severe, the beautiful with the awful, and the lovely with the repulsive. Its sweets do not surfeit, its beauties do not cloy, nor does its variety produce confusion : and if it is true that “he stands still,” that there is not action enough, it is because he stands “in thoughts too deep” to move :

*It is the hush of night, and all between
The margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,
Mellow'd and mingling, yet distinctly seen,
Save darken'd Jura, whose cap't heights appear
Precipitously steep ; and drawing near, ,*

There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
 Of flowers yet fresh with childhood ; on the ear
 Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
 Or chirps the grass-hopper on good-night carol more ;

He is an evening reveller, who makes
 His life an infancy, and sings his fill ;
 At intervals, some bird from out the brakes
 Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
 There seems a floating whisper on the hill,
 But that is fancy, for the star-light dew
All silently their tears of love instil,
Weeping themselves away, 'till they infuse
Deep into Nature's breast the spirit of their hues.

Ye stars ! which are the poetry of Heaven !
 If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
 Of men and empires,—'tis to be forgiven,
 That in our aspirations to be great,
 Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
 And claim a kindred with you ; for ye are
 A beauty and a mystery, and create
 In us such love and reverence from afar, [star.
 That fortune, fame, power, life, have named themselves a

All heav'n and earth are still—though not in sleep,
 But breathless as we grow when feeling most ;
 And silent as we stand in thought too deep :—
 All heav'n and earth are still : From the high host
 Of stars, to the lull'd lake and mountain-coast,
All is concenter'd in a life intense,
 Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
 But hath a part of being, and a sense
 Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude, where we are least alone ;

*A truth, which through our being then doth melt,
 And purifies from self: it is a tone,
 The soul and source of music, which makes known
 Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm,
 Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
 Binding all things with beauty;—'twould disarm
 The specter Death, had he substantial power to harm.*

* * * * *

*The sky is changed!—and such a change! Oh night,
 And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
 Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
 Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
 From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,
 Leaps the live thunder! Not from one cloud,
 But ev'ry mountain now hath found a tongue,
 And Jura answers through her misty shroud,
 Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud.*

Notwithstanding the wildness, the madness, the affluence of thought, and the awful grandeur which pervade Childe Harold, it contains as many lines of beauty, and as many visions of surpassing loveliness as any other poem of the same length in the language. His portraits are paragons of beauty. His characters are perfect in their kind, and hence the cry of "sameness," that is always ringing in our ears. His characters unite the beauty of the creations of Apelles with the sentiment of Shakspeare, and the delicacy of Spenser. They are not lifeless forms, but full of "speechless love," and they "fill the air around with beauty." They are not elaborated feature by feature, and clothed in mimicry, but they are created glowing with life and

beauty at a single stroke: it is with them, as he says of the arts;

I leave to learn'd fingers, and wise hands,
The artist and *his ape*, to teach and tell
How well his connoisseurship understands
The graceful bend, and the voluptuous swell :
Let these describe the undescribable :
I would not their vile breath should *crisp* the stream
Wherein that image shall forever dwell :
The unruffled mirror of the loveliest dream
That ever left the sky on the deep soul to beam.

His radiant visions have the fresh and ideal beauty of spirits from the land of Fairy. This sweet creation of Egeria is brought home to us by the youthful genius of Mr. Baker.

Egeria ! sweet creation of some heart,
Which found no mortal resting-place so fair
As thine ideal breast ; whate'er thou art
Or wert,—a young Aurora of the air,
The nympholepsy of some fond despair ;
Or, it might be, a beauty of the earth,
Who found a more than common votary there
Too much adoring ; whatsoe'er thy birth,
Thou wert a beautiful thought, and softly bodied forth.

The mosses of thy fountain still are sprinkled
With thine Elysian water drops: the face
Of thy cave-guarded spring, with years unwrinkled,
Reflects the meek-eyed genius of the place,
Whose green, wild margin now no more erase
Art's works ; nor must the delicate waters sleep,
Prison'd in marble, bubbling from the base
Of the cleft statue, with a gentle leap
The rill runs o'er, and round, fern, flowers, and ivy, creep

Fantastically tangled: the green hills
 Are cloth'd with early blossoms, through the grass
 The quick-eyed lizard rustles, and the bills
 Of summer-birds sing welcome as ye pass;
 Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their class
 Implore the pausing step, and with their dies
 Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass;
 The sweetness of the violet's deep blue eyes,
 Kiss'd by the breath of Heaven, seems color'd by its skies.

Here didst thou dwell, in this enchanted cover,
 Egeria! thy all heav'nly bosom beating,
 For the far footsteps of thy mortal lover;
 The purple midnight veil'd that mystic meeting
 With her most starry canopy, and seating
 Thyself by thine adorer, what befell?
 This cave was surely shaped out for the greeting
 Of an enamor'd goddess, and the cell
 Haunted by holy Love—the earliest oracle!

And didst thou not, thy breast to his replying,
 Blend a celestial with a human heart;
 And Love, which dies as it was born, in sighing,
 Share with immortal transports? could thine art
 Make them indeed immortal, and impart
The purity of Heav'n to earthly joys,
 Expel the venom and not blunt the dart—
 The dull satiety which all destroys—
 And root from out the soul the deadly weed which cloy?

The small poems of Byron are the most exquisite gems of thought and feeling that any age has produced. The Farewell to his wife, and the following Stanzas are immortal evidences of his sensibility and kindness of heart.

FARE THEE WELL.

Alas ! they had been friends in Youth,
 But whispering tongues can poison truth ;
 And constancy lives in realms above :
 And Life is thorny ; and youth is vain :
 And to be wroth with one we love,
 Doth work like madness on the brain.

* * * * *

But never either found another
 To free the hollow heart from paining—
 They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
 Like cliffs which had been rent asunder ;
 A dreary sea now flows between,
 But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
 Shall wholly do away, I ween
 The marks of that which once hath been.

COLERIDGE'S CHRISTABEL.

Fare thee well ! and if forever,
 Still for ever, fare thee well :
 Even, though unforgiving, never
 'Gainst thee shall my heart rebel.
 Would that breast were bared before thee,
 Where thy head so oft hath lain,
 While that placid sleep came o'er thee,
 Which thou ne'er can'st know again :
 Would that breast, by thee glanced over,
 Every inmost thought could show !
 Then thou would'st at last discover
 'Twas not well to spurn it so.
 Though the world for this commend thee—
 Though it smiled upon the blow,
 Even its praises must offend thee,
 Founded on another's wo—
 Though my many faults defaced me,
 Could no other arm be found,
 Than the one which once embraced me,
 To inflict a cureless wound ?
 Yet, oh yet thyself deceive not ;
 Love may sink by slow decay
 But by sudden wrench, believe not

Hearts can thus be torn away :
Still thine own its life retaineth—
Still must mine, though bleeding, beat,
And the undying thought which paineth
Is—that we no more may meet.
These are words of deeper sorrow
Than the wail above the dead ;
Both shall live, but every morrow
Wake us from a widow'd bed :
And when thou would'st solace gather,
When our child's first accents flow,
Wilt thou teach her to say " Father !"
Though his care she must forego ?
When her little hands shall press thee,
When her lip to thine is prest,
Think of him whose prayer shall bless thee,
Think of him thy love had bless'd !
Should her lineaments resemble
Those thou never more may'st see,
Then thy heart will softly tremble ;
With a pulse yet true to me.
All my faults perchance thou knowest,
All my madness none can know ;
All my hopes, where'er thou goest,
Whither, yet with thee they go.
Every feeling hath been shaken ;
Pride, which not a world could bow,
Bows to thee—by thee forsaken,
Even my soul forsakes me now :
But 'tis done—all words are idle—
Words from me are vainer still ;
But the thoughts we cannot bridle
Force their way without the will.—
Fare thee well !—thus disunited,
Torn from every nearer tie,
Sear'd in heart, and lone and blighted,
More than this I scarce can die.

S T A N Z A S.

I would I were a careless child,
 Still dwelling in my Highland cave,
 Or roaming through the dusky wild,
 Or bounding o'er the dark blue wave ;
 The cumbrous pomp of Saxon pride,
 Accords not with the freeborn soul,
 Which loves the mountain's craggy side,
 And seeks the rocks where billows roll.

Fortune ! take back these cultured lands,
 Take back this name of splendid sound,
 I hate the touch of servile hands,
 I hate the slaves that cringe around.
 Place me along the rocks I love,
 Which sound to Ocean's wildest roar ;
 I ask but this—again to rove,
 Through scenes my youth hath known before.

Few are my years, and yet I feel
 The world was ne'er designed for me,
 Ah ! why do dark'ning shades conceal
 The hour when man must cease to be ?
 Once I beheld a splendid dream,
 A visionary scene of bliss ;
 Truth !—wherefore did thy hated beam
 Awake me to a world like this ?

I loved—but those I loved are gone ;
 Had friends—my early friends are fled ;
 How cheerless feels the heart alone,
 When all its former hopes are dead ?
 Though gay companions o'er the bowl,
 Dispel awhile the sense of ill ;
 Though pleasure stirs the maddening soul,
 The heart—the heart is lonely still.

How dull ! to hear the voice of those
 Whom rank or chance, whom wealth or power,
 Have made, though neither friends nor foes
 Associates of the festive hour.
 Give me again a faithful few,
 In years and feelings still the same,
 And I will fly the midnight crew,
 Whose boist'rous joy is but a name.

And woman ! lovely woman, thou
 My hope, my comforter, my all !
 How cold must be my bosom now
 When e'en thy smiles begin to pall ;
 Without a sigh, would I resign
 This busy scene of splendid wo,
 To make that calm contentment mine,
 Which virtue knows, or seems to know.

Fain would I fly the haunts of men—
 I seek to shun, not hate mankind,
 My breast requires the sullen glen,
 Whose gloom may suit a darken'd mind.
*Oh ! that to me the wings were given,
 Which bear the turtle to her nest !
 Then would I cleave the vault of heaven,
 To flee away, and be at rest.*

Byron's aspirations were not too "fond and far,"
 when he cherished the hope of rearing in the English
 language an immortal monument to his memory :

I twine
 My hopes of being remembered in my line,
 In my land's language.

His hope is to be realized ; Childe Harold will never
 be forgotten while the language is read.

Byron and Scott are both writers of the Saxon stamp. Scott drew his spirit of inspiration from Beowulf and the songs of the Saxons. Byron infused life and beauty into the most common elements of his mother tongue. They did not "write in sand;" they carved in marble.

Scott's poetry is full of the wildest romance, but without the pathos or the sublimity of Byron. Scott's poetry is a rapid, narrow stream, "rolling on orient pearl;" always sparkling and bright. Byron's is a broad river, overflowing its banks: moving now in quiet grandeur, and anon it is the dashing, foaming torrent, casting up the sediment from its lowest depths. Scott gives a brilliancy, with the wildest air of romance to his creations, but it is not always real: it is the play of fancy on the surface. He leads his reader on, and keeps him in a state of surprise by the unexpected developments of the plot. His characters are always seeking occasion for effect: they start up from their concealment like a flash, and disappear in a moment; amidst the wildest scenery we come suddenly upon the most lovely forms, and every thing we behold thus acquires an adventitious interest. His poetry depends upon the story for effect, as much as his novels: and *Ivanhoe* is as poetic as any thing he ever wrote. Indeed it is superior to his poetry in this, that it leaves a deeper impression, it works out a result. The heavenly Jewess is the most lovely creation of his genius.

"Scott," says Byron, "is undoubtedly the monarch of Parnassus, and the most *English* of poets;" but

this "graduation" is judiciously founded on popular opinion rather than real merit. He pleased all classes with his fine fancies, and lived in the unclouded sunshine of popular favor ; but he was not a towering genius. He struck upon a happy vein, and he worked it to the popular taste ; but he could not, like Chaucer, give the air of reality to romance ; nor like Spenser, infuse life and beauty into the dry abstractions of the mind ; nor, like Shakspeare, throw all the elements of nature, and all forms of human life, into a single design ; nor, like Milton, grasp the universe in his imagination : nor, like Byron, " wrapt in the shroud of his own thoughts," give forth those words, which like the Pythian oracles of yore, " set the world in flame."

ERRATA.

Page 82, 17th line from top, for "All had *hard*," read "All had *heard*."

Page 332, 11th line from top, for "*was*," read "*were*."

Page 334, 15th line from top, for "Lord *Byron*," read "Lord *Bacon*."

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.

“The same element conveys the same fundamental idea through all languages, within the sphere of its acknowledged affinity; from which probably no form of speech now spoken on the face of the globe is altogether excluded. p. 73.”

“Having seen, that in the forming of any system it was necessary to adopt a known and acknowledged principle—universally prevailing, I began to consider, 1st, what great general fact existed; and 2d, whether it could be applied to any purpose in the adoption of a new theory. I sought for information in those words, which were most familiarly employed; as it is manifest, that if any uniformity was observed in words so perpetually liable to change from frequent use, I had the strongest evidence for concluding, that such an uniformity was generally prevailing. Father, in English, I perceived to be Faeder in Saxon; Vater, in German; Padre, in Italian and Spanish; Fader, in Islandic and Danish; Vader, in Belgic, Pater, in Latin and Pateer (Πατήρ) in Greek: in other cases of the Greek Pateer we have Pater and Patros (Πατήρ-ος Πατρ-ος) and if the changes of the word were to be represented, as it is sounded in different dialects in the kingdom, it might be written Feethir—Fauthir, and in various other ways. In Persian, Father is Faeder; and in Sancrit, Petree, as I find it represented by Mr. Wilkins in his notes to the Heelopades, (page 307.) A more striking uniformity we shall instantly acknowledge cannot well be imagined than that, which is exhibited in the preceding term. We here perceive, though the word Father has assumed these various forms, that the difference arises only from the change

of vowels themselves or their place, but that the *same consonants*, or those which all grammarians, at all times, have acknowledged to be cognate, have still been preserved."

Whiter's Etymological Dictionary, p. 4.

To the illustration of this principle, Mr. Whiter has devoted three large quarto volumes.

The cognate consonants, commutable letters, or what Mr. Whiter terms the *same elements*, are letters of the same organs, as B, F, M, P, V, and W,—D, T, Th, and S,—G, C, K and Q,—R, L, and D. Labials are commutable for other labials, dentals for dentals, &c.

Mr. Webster's observations on the affinity of languages go to substantiate the same general principle.

"Although few of the primitive words can now be recognized as existing in *all* the languages, yet as we better understand the changes which have been made in the orthography and signification of the same radical words, the more affinities are discovered; and particularly, when we understand the *primary* sense, we find this to unite words whose *appropriate* or *customary* significations appear to have no connection."

Introduction to Amer. Dic. of the English Language.

NOTE B.

A list of a few of the Saxon words, which have affinities in other languages, viz: the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Sanscrit, Coptic, Persian and Arabic.

Abidan, to abide
Ac, an oak
Ace, pain
Aex, an ax
Aide, help
Alda, old
Anchor, anchor
Annan, to give
An, in

Ange, angry
Ase, as
Banca, a bench
Beon, to be
Beorht, bright
Beorth, a birth
Biddan, to pray
Bitu, a morsel
Bi, near

Blendian, to mix
 Blec, black
 Bonda, a husband
 Brid, a bride
 Brother, Brother
 Brym, the Sea
 Cald, called
 Can, seen
 Cist, kindness,
 Cite, a city
 Cliff, a hill
 Clypian, to call
 Cos, a kiss
 Cot, a house
 Cu, a cow
 Cunnan, to know,
 Cwen, a wife, queen
 Cyneg, a king
 Daeg, a day
 Deorc, dark
 Dim, obscure,
 Dragan, to draw
 Drem, melody
 Droprian, to drop
 Dynan, to dine
 Dynt, a blow
 Dochter, daughter
 Etan, to eat
 Eom, I am
 Eorthe, the earth
 Ece, eternal
 Femna, a girl
 Faran, to go
 Fea, money
 Frum, beginning
 Fader, father
 Gea, yes, truly
 God, the Supreme
 God, good
 Habban, to have
 Hemitho, marriage
 Hweate, wheat
 Hloh, he laughed
 Heafod, the head
 Heah, high

Halewese, save you
 Ic, I
 Is, he is
 It, it
 Ist, is
 Isa, ice
 Ing, a meadow
 Inne, in
 Lac, a lake
 Lagan, to lay down
 Leoht, light
 Lufa, love
 Lust, luxury
 Ledan, to lead
 Lustan, to desire
 Lyden, speech
 Micel, much
 Me, me
 Moder, mother
 Mod, the mind
 Meltan, to melt
 Mine, mine
 Neow, now
 No, not
 Nicht, night
 Nama, name
 Naman, to name
 Neah, nigh
 Na, not
 On, one
 Onlu, only
 Ongalan, to sing
 Oxa, an ox
 Orf, cattle
 Pile, a pillow
 Plume, a plum
 Race
 Raed, a discourse
 Regn, a ruler
 Regel, rule
 Reght, right
 Rice, rich, a kingdom
 Rixian, to rule
 Saegen, to say
 Samod, together

Saeng, song	Thanne, then
Sefa, the intellect	Thu, thou
Seon, to see	Thanian, to thunder
Setan, to sit	Tim, time
Siftan, to sift	Tilian, to study
Sitan, to sit	Teiss, affliction
Stor, history	Weg, a way
Sunu, a son	Waer, water
Swa, so	Weodueo, a widow
Setan, to place	Weran, to be
Sawl, the soul	Willan, to will
Sage, wise	Win, wine
Swuster, sister	Wilnian, to desire
Telan, to tell	Wilan, to know

SAXON SYNONYMES.

Nith,	} Man.	Ides,	} Woman.
Wira,		Wyf,	
Fira,		Femne,	
Calla,		Megth,	
Guma,		Ewe,	
Haeleth,		Meowla,	
Wer,		Blaed,	
Winc,		Mennen,	
Folc,		Piga,	
		Gebeddu,	

WORDS REPRESENTING THE MIND.

Mod,		Gefraege,	
Gethune,		Gewit,	
Ferth,		Runcsfu,	
Hige,		Hig-sceft,	
Hrether,		Ingehygd,	
Gewit loca		Mod-gethoht,	
Sefa,		Gethoht,	
Mod-sefa,		Orthome,	
Genrynd,		Andgit,	
Wit,			
Lornung,	} Learning,	Leoth,	} Song.
Lornesse,		Fitt,	
Croeft,	} Knowledge.	Gyd,	} Poetry.
Witolnesse,		Sang,	
		Dreamnesse,	
	ADVERBS.	Gethwere,	
Witerdlíce,	} Knowingly.	Spell,	
Wittinglice,			

SAXON DAYS.

Sun's day,	Sunnandaæg,	Sunday,
Moon's day,	Monan "	Monday,
Tiw's day,	Tiwes "	Tuesday,
Woden's day,	Woden "	Wednesday,
Thurre's day,	Thurre' "	Thursday,
Frigga's day,	Frigga "	Friday,
Saeterne's day,	Saeter "	Saturday.

NOTE C.

LAYAMON.

This composition was written about the last of the twelfth century, or in the beginning of the thirteenth, at or very near the time, when the Saxons and Normans adopted a common language, and exhibits the intermediate diction between the Saxon and English. It will be observed that it contains nearly an equal number of Saxon and English words. The whole style of the Saxon is broken up; it is throwing off its inflections, and assuming a free and natural style.

*Tha the masse wes isungen
Of chircchen heo thrungen.
The king mid his folke
To his mete verde
And mucle his dugethe
Drem wes on hirede
Tha quene, an othe halve
Hire hereberwe isokte
Heo hafde of wif-monne
Wunder ane monien*

*Tha the king wes iseten
Mid his-monnen to his mete
To than kinge com tha biscop,
Seind Dubrig, the wasswa god,
And nom of his hafde
His kinc-helm hæhne,
For than mucle golde
The king hine beren n'alde,
And dude enne lasse crune
On tha kinges hafde
And seoth-then he gon do
Athere quene alswa*

When the mass was sung,
out of church they thronged.
the king with his folks
to his meat went,
and many of his nobility:
joy was in the household,
the queen on the other side,
her lodging sought;
she had of women
wonder a many one.

when the king was sitting
with his men at meat:
to the king came the bishop
Saint Dubric that was so good
and took from off his head,
his royal crown
for so much gold
the king did not like to carry,
and a less crown
did place on the king's head;
and afterwards he goes to do
the same to the queen also.

Inne Trol this was lage
Bi Æora eldernes dage
 Tha Bruttes of come.
 The weoren wel idone
 Alle tha wepmen
 At heore mete seten
Sundi bi Ærom seolren
 That Ærom thuhte weldon
 And alswa tha wifmen
 Heore iwuns hafden.

Tha the king was isete
 Mid alle his dugeth to his mete
 Eorls and beornes
 At borde thas Kinge
 The stiward com steppen
 The KAY was ihaten
Hart cniht on londe
 Under than Kinge
 Of alle than *hepe*
Of Arthures hirede.
 KAY *hehte* him bivoren
Moni Æah mon iboren.
 Ther weoren a thusen cnihte bald,
Wunder wel italde
 That *theineden* than kingen
 And his here thringen.
 Ælc cniht hafde pal on
 And mid golde blgon ;
 And alle heore *vingeres*
Iriwen mid gold ringes,
 Thas *beorn* tha *sunde*
 From *Kuchene* to than kinge.

An other half was Beduer
 T'has kinges *hoeg* birle
 Mid him weoren eorlene sunen,
 Of *aethel* cunne iboren ;
 And there hehge cnihtene sunen
 Tha thider weoren *icunen*,
 Seoven kingene sunen,
 That mid him *quehten*.
 Beduer *avormest eode*
 Mid *guldene* bolle ;
 After him a thused
Thraستن to *hirede* ;
 And alle thas *cunnes drenche*
 Theme cuthe on bithenche.
 And tha quene, an hire ende,
 Wifmen *swide hende* :
 A thused hire eoden bivoren
 Riche men and wel icoren,
 To *thainen* there quene
 And than that mid hire weoren.

In Troy this was law
 from their ancient days
 when Britons came thence.
 that were well educated (well done)
 all the women
 at their meat sate
 assunder by themselves ;
 that they thought well done.
 and also the women
 of their houses,

when the king was set
 with all his nobility at his meat,
 earls and barons,
 at the king's table
 the steward came stepping,
 the KAY was called
 the highest knight in the land,
 under the king
 of all the number
 of Arthur's household,
 KAY called before him
 many high men born.
 there were a thousand bold knights,
 wonder well numbered
 that served the king
 and were his servants.
 each knight had a mantle on
 and with gold studded ;
 and all their fingers
 were covered with gold rings,
 that bore many things
 from Kitchen to the King.

In another part was Bedwer,
 the king's high butler.
 with him were the earl's sons
 of noble kin born ;
 and the high knight's sons
 that thither were come ;
 seven king's sons
 that with him marched.
 Bedwer foremost went
 with a gold bowl :
 after him a thousand
 pressed forward to serve ;
 and all the kinds of drink
 they could think of.
 and the queen, on her part,
 a woman, very beautiful ;
 a thousand went before her
 rich men and well chosen,
 to serve their queen,
 and those that went with her.

This specimen of Layamon throws more light upon English etymology than all that has been written on it. This specimen does not contain a word which is not in its essence pure Saxon, from which the English proceeds directly. Mr. Ellis, who copied this specimen from the original MSS., says of it, "as it does not contain any word which we are under the necessity of referring to a French origin, we cannot but consider it as simple and unmixed, though very barbarous Saxon. At the same time, the orthography of this MSS., in which we see, for the first time, the admission of the soft *g*, together with the Saxon *g*, as well as some other peculiarities, seems to prove that the pronunciation of our language had already undergone a considerable change. Indeed, the whole style of this composition, which is broken into a series of short, unconnected sentences, and in which the construction is as plain and artless as possible, and perfectly free from inversions, appears to indicate that little more than the substitution of a few French for the present Saxon words was now necessary, to produce an exact resemblance with that Anglo-Norman, or English, of which we possess a few specimens, supposed to have been written in the early part of the thirteenth century." Ellis, *Early Eng. Poets*, vol. 1, p. 59.

There has been much speculation about the *time* "when the national speech can be said to have ceased to be Saxon, and begun to be English." Dr. Johnson says in the introduction to his Dictionary in reference to this question; "nor can it be expected from the nature of things gradually changing, that any time can be assigned when Saxon may be said to cease, and the English to commence.

"About the year 1150, the Saxon begun to take a form in which the beginning of the present English may be plainly discovered: this change seems not to have been the effect of the Norman conquest, for very few French words are found to have been introduced in the first hundred years after it; the language must, therefore, have been altered by causes like

those which, notwithstanding the care of writers and societies instituted to obviate them, are even now daily making innovations in every living language."

Mr. Hallam says, nothing can be more difficult, except by an arbitrary line, than to determine the commencement of the English of the thirteenth century with the Anglo-Saxon of the twelfth, it seems hard to pronounce why it should pass for a separate language, rather than a modification or simplification of the former. We must conform, however, to usage, and say that the Anglo-Saxon was converted into English—1st, by contracting or otherwise modifying the pronunciation or orthography of words; 2ndly, by omitting many inflections, especially of the nouns, and consequently making more use of articles and auxiliaries; 3rdly, by the introduction of French derivatives; 4thly, by using less inversion and ellipsis, especially in poetry, (Lit. H., vol. 1, p. 57.)

He agrees with others in the use of the term Semi-Saxon, which is to cover every thing from 1150 to 1250.

Mr. Ellis is of the opinion that the English "suddenly superseded the pure and legitimate Saxon, from which its elements were principally derived, and that the changes which commenced about 1180, may be considered as complete in 1216.

Mr. Campbell is of opinion that the style of Layamon exhibits the intermediate state of the old and new language, but does not believe in the "sudden transition" of Mr. Ellis, "We may, therefore," he says, "on the whole, consider the style of Layamon to be as nearly the intermediate state of the old and new languages as can be found in any ancient specimen:—something like the new insect stirring its wings, before it has shaken off the aurelia state. But of this work, or of any specimen supposed to be written in the early part of the thirteenth century, displaying a sudden transition from Saxon to English, I am disposed to repeat my doubts."

Essay on English Poetry, preface to British Poets, p 36.

A variety of opinions exist also, with regard to the cause which effected the transition of the language. The most gen-

eral opinion is, that the Norman conquest was the immediate cause. Mr. Ellis says; "the establishment of our present mixed language, and indeed every link in the chain of its history, may, perhaps be traced to this important event, as its remote cause and origin. But the mode of its operation has not been, I think, satisfactorily explained; too much having been attributed to the supposed prejudices, and imaginary designs of the Conqueror, while the general circumstances in which he was placed, and the obvious tendency of his general policy, have been too much overlooked."—*Vol. 3, p. 387.*

"Before the Norman accession," says Mr. Warton, which succeeded to the Saxon government, we were an unformed and unsettled race. That mighty revolution obliterated almost all relation to the former inhabitants of this island; and produced that signal change in our policy, constitution, and public manners, the effects of which have reached modern times."

Preface to his Eng. Poetry.

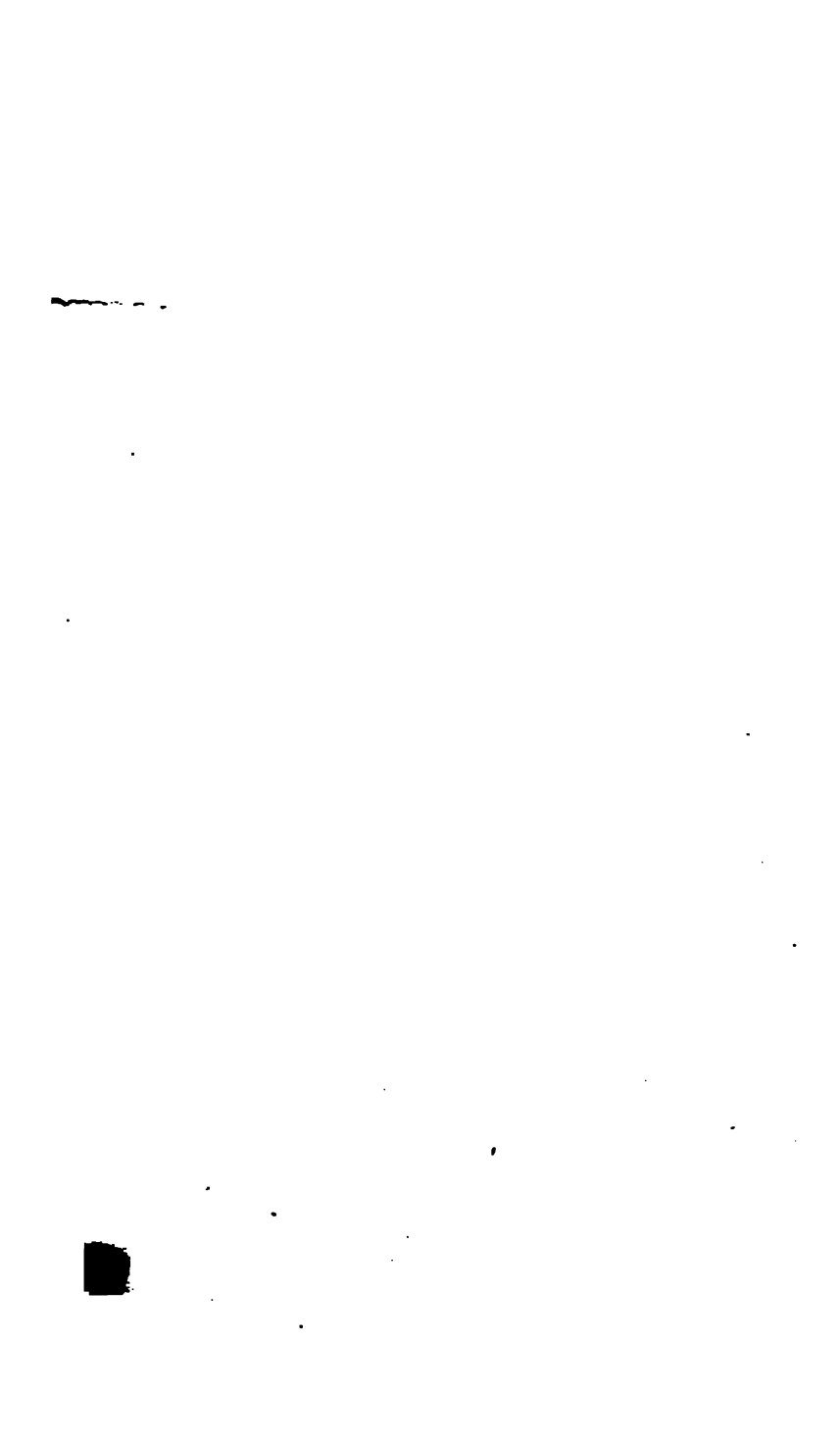
In reply to the remark of Mr. Mitford; "that the dialect of Layamon has every appearance of a language thrown into confusion by the circumstances of those who spoke it,"—Mr. Price admits that a change had taken place in the language since the days of Alfred, but denies that it was in any way effected by the Norman Conquest, or by political revolutions of any kind.

"In the specimen published by Mr. Ellis, not a Gallicism is to be found, nor even a Norman term: and so far from exhibiting any "appearance of a language thrown into confusion by the circumstances of those who spoke it," nearly every important form of Anglo-Saxon grammar is rigidly adhered to; and so little was the language altered at this advanced period of Norman influence, that a few slight variations might convert it into genuine Anglo-Saxon. That some change had taken place in the style of composition, and general structure of the language, since the days of Alfred, is a matter beyond dispute; but that those mutations were a consequence of the Norman invasion, or were accelerated by that event, is wholly incapa-

ble of proof; and nothing is supported upon a firmer principle of rational induction, than that the same effects would have ensued if William and his followers had remained in their native soil. The substance of the change is admitted on all hands to consist in the suppression of those grammatical intricacies, occasioned by the inflection of nouns, the seemingly arbitrary distinctions of gender, the government of prepositions, &c. How far this may be considered as the result of an innate law of the language, or some general law in the organization of those who spoke it we may leave for the present undecided: but that it was in no way dependent upon external circumstances, upon foreign influence or political disturbances, is established by this remarkable fact, that every branch of the Low German stock, from whence the Anglo Saxon sprang, displays the same simplification of grammar. In all these languages, there has been a constant tendency to relieve themselves of that precision which chooses a fresh symbol for every shade of meaning, to lessen the amount of nice distinctions, and detect as it were a royal road to the interchange of opinion. Yet in thus diminishing their grammatical forms, and simplifying their rules, in this common effort to evince a striking contrast to the usual effects of civilization, all confusion has been prevented by the very manner in which the operation has been conducted; for the revolution produced has been so gradual in its progress, that it is only to be discovered on a comparison of the respective languages, at periods at a considerable interval."

Mr. Price's Preface to Warton's Hist. of Eng. Poetry, p. 87.









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